University of Alberta

Canada's Second Ladies:
Prime Ministers' Wives from Margaret Trudeau to Aline Chrétien

by

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Canada

Abstract

This work explores the role of prime minister's wife and its evolution from 1973 to 2003. In particular, the work seeks to understand how the role of prime minister's wife is understood in Canada in the contemporary social/political milieu (1970s to the present) and expose its complexities and contradictions. The case studies of Margaret Trudeau (1971-1977), Maureen McTeer (1979-1980; wife of Joe Clark), Mila Mulroney (1984-1993), and Aline Chrétien (1993-2003) are used.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The wives of the prime ministers of Canada have had a varying place in the public sphere throughout Canada's history, from the obscure to front-page material, back to obscure. Indeed, until Margaret Trudeau's prominence in the media, the wives of the prime ministers had received little public exposure. In fact, a search of the Globe and Mail's database revealed that not a single story in the national newspaper mentioned either Olive Diefenbaker (in the office of prime minister's wife from 1957 to 1963) or Maryon Pearson (in office from 1963 to 1968).

In this work, I explore the role of prime minister's wife and its evolution from 1973 to 2003. In particular, I seek to understand how the role of prime minister's wife is understood in Canada in the contemporary social/political milieu (1970s to the present) and expose its complexities and contradictions. I use the case studies of Margaret Trudeau (1971-1977), Maureen McTeer (1979-1980; wife of Joe Clark), Mila Mulroney (1984-1993), and Aline Chrétien (1993-2003). While Geills Turner was the wife of the prime minister between the end of June 1984 and the middle of September of 1984, I have not included her in this study because she was in office for such a short time and very little was written about her.

Just as each woman was a very different person, with different experiences, and different personalities, each of the women brought a different approach to the role of prime minister's wife. Margaret had little to do with party politics for the majority of the time that she was married to Pierre, while Maureen and Mila were deeply involved in the parties that their husbands led. All three were young and were in the public eye for most of the time they spent in 24 Sussex Drive (the official residence of the prime minister of Canada) and in Stornoway (the official residence of the leader of the opposition). Aline Chrétien provided a contrast to the other women in this study; she was middle-aged by the time Jean Chrétien ascended to leadership of his party, was of a different generation than the other women in this study, and had spent much of her married life as the wife of a highly-placed politician. Also, while acknowledged by her husband to be an important advisor to him and an essential element in his success, Aline was a much less public figure than Margaret, Maureen, and Mila, choosing to participate in her husband's career away (for the most part) from the glare of the media's attention.

I have chosen to explore this topic because, even with Aline Chrétien's (and her successors') less public approach to the role, the prime minister's wife has become an important figure in Canadian politics. Even in the recent Liberal leadership race, the spouses of each of the candidates were compared by Maclean's magazine to Laureen Harper, the current prime minister's wife. While certainly not as public and political a figure as the first lady of the United States, the prime minister's wife, depending on her temperament and preferences, has public and private influence that she can wield. I think it is important to understand the role and its possibilities, to think about the legitimacy (or lack thereof) of the kind of influence a woman in the position can claim.

While each prime minister's wife in this study shaped the role to a certain extent to suit her personality, experience, and ambition, each encountered censure when she broke with the unwritten and unspoken expectations of how a prime minister's wife would conduct herself. I explore, through a narrative of the choices each woman in this study made during her time in office and through an analysis of the media coverage in the national newspaper of each woman's tenure, the inherent contradictions of the role and what effects those contradictions had on each woman. This is a role that is hard to fill, and almost impossible to define. It is in many ways eminently flexible and constantly evolving. However, there seem to be some public expectations for each woman who fills the role, which, if she contravenes them, open her to criticism and even censure. As Maureen McTeer observed in her autobiography, "a political wife as a quiet, supportive, well-dressed and smiling helpmate was still the norm and what most Canadians wanted" (2004: 48). My survey of Globe and Mail coverage of each woman bears out McTeer's argument; Margaret Trudeau, Maureen McTeer, and Mila Mulroney all stepped beyond this norm in that they were none of them *quiet*. They all stepped into the public eye in order to support their husbands but also to pursue their own goals. As I argue below, Margaret was looking for personal celebrity and fulfillment, Maureen was seeking social change and professional fulfillment, and Mila was constructing a cult of celebrity for herself and her husband. Aline Chrétien is the only woman in this study who fulfilled this norm and who, as a result, received the greatest amount of approbation and the least amount of criticism.

The title of this work reflects the place that a prime minister's wife has in the Canadian polity—she is not the first lady because the prime minister is head of government, not the head of state. The first lady (or gentleman) of Canada would be the Governor General's spouse, although the title has rarely, if ever, been applied to Her (or His) Excellency. The framework for this study is drawn from a large and multi-dimensional literature which was meant to provide an international context to the discussion.

Literature Review

Political spouses in countries around the world have are surprisingly under-represented in academic literature, despite the significant power and influence they may wield. However, I have attempted to contexualize my discussion of the Canadian prime minister's wife by finding literature from political systems that are similar to the Canadian system or systems in which the political spouse has not reached the status of the American first lady. Indeed, in the United States, the field of "first lady studies" is beginning to flourish as a branch of presidential studies. I, in this review, discuss some important texts in the British context; the works on British prime ministers' wives have some relevance to my study, as the political system and culture in Canada have many similarities to its British predecessor. Then I turn to a short review of important texts in the Mexican arena, where the *primera dama* has many similarities to the prime minister's wife of Canada, including the constant importation of American culture and values. I briefly discuss some of the more important American texts without attempting a complete review of the extensive literature. I chose the texts that are part of this study because of their prominence in the field. Finally, I review the literature that exists on prime ministers' wives in Canada in the most detail, describing what has been written by and about Canada's second ladies since Margaret Trudeau.

United Kingdom

As the model for our parliamentary system of government, the United Kingdom offers insights into the history of and forces that have shaped the role of the prime minister's wife. There are many similarities between the roles in the United Kingdom in Canada; political wives in the U.K. occupy the same kind of contradictory position of having a role to play that is generally undefined and yet open to public scrutiny and criticism. For example, Cherie Booth, United Kingdom Prime Minister Tony Blair's wife, was expected to have a polished look and yet was roundly disparaged when it came out that she wanted a government allowance to cover the costs of getting her hair done regularly for the many functions she was expected to attend at her husband's side.

In Five at Ten: Prime Ministers' Consorts since 1957, Diana Farr argued that the consorts of top politicians are intrinsically interesting and important. "In so many ways a leading politician's partner can, often unconsciously, change the fate of nations – a nudge in the right or wrong direction, well-meant, sometimes ill-judged advice, sexual rejection, a breakfast quarrel are just a few examples" (1985: 6). She profiled, as the title of her book suggests, five consorts of British Prime Ministers. She did not use the term "wives" because Denis Thatcher is one of the spouses she discusses. The aim of her book was to provide essentially benign profiles of the five people she selected as her subjects (1985: 3), and to "describe within a given time how life prepared five very different people to face the privileges and responsibilities of being a prime minister's consort" (1985: 2).

In the introduction of The Goldfish Bowl: Married to the Prime Minister by Cherie Booth and Cate Haste, Booth expressed surprise at the effect her husband's position as leader of the opposition had on her life (2004: xi). She also stated that she was utterly unprepared for life at Number 10 Downing Street (the official residence of the prime minister of the United Kingdom). She wrote that "it seemed that the spouses were invisible witnesses of history" (Booth: xiii). The goal of the book, wrote Booth, was to allow "[…] hitherto hidden voices to speak for themselves and at the same time to illustrate how their experiences throw light on the changing roles of men and women in the second half of the twentieth century" (2004: xiv). The book consisted of chapters on various women (and one man) who filled the role of prime minister's spouse in Britain from the mid-fifties onward. The chapters were in my view well-written with interesting and salient biographical sketches, with a focus on how the subject of the chapter filled the role, but with little in the way of critical discussion. There was no attempt to discuss success or failure in the role, but rather an attempt to understand what each person did to cope with the role that they were expected to fill. The concluding paragraph of each chapter tried to summarize each person's time in the role and give it a positive spin. Booth reviewed the personal challenges that living in Number 10 presents, from uncomfortable living quarters to media scrutiny, and concluded that each spouse found their own way, filled the role in their own style, and that "[…] they all made a contribution to public life" (2004: 275). She also noted that the two acceptable public roles for all prime ministers' spouses have been as hostesses/hosts in the entertaining of domestic and international dignitaries and as the public faces of charities, including involvement in fundraising. Of particular interest to this study is Booth's statement in the conclusion of the book that "[t]here is no job description for the Prime Minister's spouse because there is no job. But there is a unique position that provides for each holder an opportunity and a challenge. The opportunity is to support and, if possible, add value to the work of the Prime Minister; the challenge is to live up to the public's expectations of the role without doing any harm" (2004: 263).

Mexico

Like her U.S. counterpart, the Mexican president's wife is, indeed, the *primera dama* (first lady) of the country; the ceremonial and political heads of state are combined in the single office of the presidency. However, until fairly recently, the president's wife had little or no real public role, as was true in the Canadian case. The evolution of the role of political wives in Mexico is one that is potentially instructive for the Canadian situation but there is a dearth of analysis in the Mexican context. However, interesting things are happening for political wives, as their roles change dramatically with the onset of democratic consolidation in Mexico. Two texts supply particularly interesting commentary and analysis of the situation.

Victoria Rodriguez's 2003 text, Women in Contemporary Mexican Politics, was the result of six years' research, including countless interviews with women involved in the politics of Mexico. An outstanding section of the book discusses the role of political wives, an interesting inclusion since most books about women in politics, no matter the nationality, do not consider political wives to be political. Her discussion of Mexico's political wives was as illuminating as the rest of her work on that country's women in politics. She explained the rapid transformation of their roles, from invisible to active:

> The traditional pattern followed by Mexican political wives is entirely different from that familiar in the United States—that is, they have been mostly reduced to accompanying their husbands during official functions, doing charity work and looking after their social engagements. In the vast majority of cases they were shut out of the political realm (2003: 235).

This pattern is one that would be familiar to most current Canadian political wives. Rodriguez argued, however, that this situation has been shifting; although women were not generally active in their political husbands' campaigns or public lives prior to the 1980s, political wives became much more involved during and after the debt crisis as issues shifted to encompass those that were considered more relevant to women (2003: 232). As Mexican political wives have had a greater burden of public life shifted to them, they have adapted and have become more political: "they have developed strong networks among themselves, especially along party lines, that become crucial when one of them decides to run for office or pursue a career of her own. They have also learned to develop their own skills, such as public speaking [...]. Political wives have also learned to be media-savy [...]" (2003: 235). This evolution has strong parallels to my study:

Margaret Trudeau went from silence to public speaking in the time she occupied 24 Sussex Drive; Maureen McTeer cultivated her formidable speaking skills and became more media savvy during her time in Stornoway and 24 Sussex; Mila Mulroney cultivated a public persona through public appearances and interactions with the media; and even Aline Chrétien, the least public of the women in my study, became more adept at public speaking during her time in office.

The other text that illuminates the situation of the Mexican political wife, and specifically, the *primera dama*, is La Suerte de la Consorte [Consort's Luck] by Sara Sefchovitch, published in 2002. Sefchovitch supplied both a comprehensive biography of each first lady since the founding of the nation-state known as Mexico and an analysis of the role. The analysis in this book makes this work stand head and shoulders above most biographical compilations, particularly most of those published in Canada, the United States, and Britain. Sefchovitch asserted that the *primera damas* of Mexico are put in a contradictory and essential untenable position. Her support for this argument is strong: first, no-one elects the *primera dama*, she is not given a salary, and she rarely receives more than a 'thank you,' but at the same time society feels that it has the right to demand that she perform a series of tasks that it assigns to her and feels the right to criticize her for everything she does or does not do, how she looks, and what she says or what she doesn't comment on (2002: 486). Second, her duties are not set out or defined in any law or regulation, rather they are set out in customs and consist of contradictory obligations which she must put up with whether she likes it or not, whether the tasks interest her or not, trying to attain an impossible balance and to satisfy everyone (2002: 486-487). Third, she is closer than anyone to supreme power but she has none herself (2002: 487). Fourth, she is not in her position because of her own merits or her own desires, nor for personal interest or will. Rather, she is there because of obligation, because of her spouse's expectations of her (2002: 487). While some might debate these points as universal to the role of spouses of all heads of government, they are a good beginning for a discussion of the contradictions inherent in the role of political spouse.

United States

More has been written about first ladies/political spouses in the United States than any other country. According to Stooksbury and Edgemon, scholars who produced a complete literature review of the critical work on the topic published in the United States, the topic is becoming more important as a legitimate field of study (2002: 97). They caution, however, that "Further research is needed to strengthen and clarify the existing categories of literature and cultivate this important field of study" (2002: 107).

Borelli, in "The First Lady as Formal Advisor to the President: When East (Wing) Meets West (Wing)," reviewed in detail the development of the office of the first lady, paying particular attention to the legalities that limit the ability of the first lady to engage in official (and paid) work for the government headed by her husband. She pointed to important legislation that does not allow the first lady to engage in paid labour for the government, as family members of elected officials are prevented from being hired in order to prevent nepotism. She also summarized another law that does not allow a family member to volunteer for the government. Interestingly, despite this apparently complete legal ban on any kind of involvement in politics by the first lady, Borelli described an important court decision that allows the first lady to engage in unpaid labour for the government because of strong past precedents. Borelli does not come to any solid conclusions about the office of first lady, beyond the assertion the first lady herself is in an extremely awkward legal position that will certainly get more difficult as the role evolves into a more complex one.

Betty Boyd Caroli's First Ladies: From Martha Washington to Hillary Clinton, the fascinating lives of the women in the influential role of America's First Lady examined the terms of each of the first ladies since the beginning of the presidency. It emphasized not only that the role had been shaped by the women who have filled it but the work also tried to illustrate the evolution of the role as society itself changed and evolved. While Caroli did not attempt to rate the success or failure of the women about whom she was writing, she tried to illustrate the effect that each had on the role. Caroli described each woman's personal history, her involvement in her husband's career, and emphasized the choices she made regarding the way she filled the role of first lady. The last chapter of the book was entitled "New Dimensions to the Role of First Lady 1974-1997," and described the progressively more activist roles Betty Ford, Rosalynn Carter, Nancy Reagan, and Hillary Clinton shaped for themselves. It was an interesting book, in that it investigated both the microcosm of each woman's life and the macrocosm of her influence on her successors.

Gil Troy's exhaustive work on first ladies who served since the Eisenhower years, Affairs of State: The Rise and Rejection of the Presidential Couple Since World War II, is cited in most articles and books on the subject. It is a rather conservative tome that described each of the first ladies in a general biographical manner, with a focus on their time in office. His advice for first couples to be successful in the public eye reflected his cynical and conservative leanings.

> Don't be yourselves: be who they want you to be [...] Support each other, rely on each other, but don't forget who's boss [...] Let the white-glove pulpit resonate with the bully pulpit [...] Treat the spouse's project as an integral part of the administration [...] The less power you seem to want, the more you'll get and the more popular you shall be [...] Never criticize the president, unless you both agree it's convenient [...] Pioneers belong in the wild west, and possibly the West Wing but certainly not the East Wing [...] When in doubt, go retro. Most Americans hold the First Couple to a higher and more old-fashioned standard. [...] Nothing is trivial and the personal is political, but don't take the political personally [...] You get one *mea culpa*; use it well [...] Take the long-term view of your marriage [...] Keep up appearances—you set the standard now, and your marriage belongs to history (1997: 379-384).

Watson, in The Presidents' Wives: Reassessing the Office of the First Lady argued that "[a]s the most influential and scrutinized woman in the United States, the first lady also functions as a sort of barometer for the status of women in society and its shifting views of "womanhood." Her roles, political activities, and treatment by the press and public reflect the status of women and societal expectations of women throughout history" (2000: 20-21). Watson lamented, however, the lack of a discussion that places the first lady in the "larger context of the history of women or the institution of the presidency" (2000: 22).

Watson stated that there are several valuable approaches to studying the first lady but the approach that he suggested would lead to the most fruitful study is "the presidential partner approach," in which he supplied five partnership typologies: the full partner, the partial partner, the behind-the-scenes partner, the partner in marriage, and the non-partner (2000: 140).

He made an attempt at rating the success of first ladies by having a large number of academics evaluate them based on their participation in public life, their causes, their intelligence, and their influence on the president (among other criteria). He also suggested that there are eleven fundamental duties of the modern office of first lady: wife and mother; public figure and celebrity; nation's social hostess; symbol of the American woman; White House manager and preservationist; campaigner; social advocate and champion of social causes; presidential spokesperson; presidential and party booster; diplomat; and political and presidential partner (2000: 72). However, "because there is no formal job description, few legal precedents, and no constitutional guidance available to the first lady, essentially all of her activities are open to criticism and questioning" (2000: 32). In discussing the various roles of the first lady, Watson argued that the office is "defined by paradoxes" (2000:33), and that "the public and press demand active, public roles for the first lady, and when first ladies act accordingly, the public and press are often critical of these very roles" (2000: 33).

Germaine Greer's searing criticism of the first lady-ization of the wife of any country's political leader, published in the New Republic in 1995, argued that the more public a political spouse's role becomes, the more harm it does to the feminist movement, as that woman is merely a show piece for the husband who is running for office and the more public her role, the less likely she will be able to pursue her own life and career. Greer's piece is one of the few that approaches the issue from an openly and wholly feminist stance. The 'sharing of a bed' is not, Greer argued, an appropriate qualification to fill the role expected of the American first lady; she averred that professional cooks and hoteliers should be left to the task (1995: 27). Greer was opposed to the trend toward turning the previously private spouses of political leaders in other countries "into the silent and decorative first lady of the United States" (1995: 24).

Canada

Two of the women under discussion have put out first-person accounts of their experiences of being political wives and about other aspects of their lives. Beyond Reason, by Margaret Trudeau was published in 1979 and was ghost-written. It is comprised of a partial description of her childhood and teenaged rebellions and a painfully narcissistic and bitter dissection of her life with her famous husband, Pierre Trudeau. Consequences, also by Margaret Trudeau, first published in 1982, rehashed and re-framed many of the points and anecdotes that appeared in Beyond Reason. Trudeau had clearly not recovered from what had happened to her in the public eye and she reiterated, with a great deal more vitriol, her complaints against Pierre and the press in the second book. She also divulged many more sordid details about her relationships with her husband and with other men. She described her life in the intervening time between the publication of Beyond Reason and Consequences, with a focus on sex, drugs and rock and roll.

In my view, the books were both a bid for attention at a time when the public eye was starting to turn from her and a cathartic release of many details that she believed were misrepresented by the press. In any case, the books revealed a woman who was not comfortable in her own skin, and who was not a full partner to her prime minister husband, despite her occasional campaign appearance and regular involvement in state visits.

In My Own Name, by Maureen McTeer was a very different kind of autobiography. It was not written by a woman who was still in the thick of the controversy she stirred up. Rather, it was a measured look back on the events that had formed her. It was also a fascinating look into the political history of Canada. McTeer was deeply involved in politics before she met Joe Clark and their marriage did not put an end to her interest. This book was a look through an insider's eyes at the good and bad of politics. She contemplated womanhood, motherhood, and wifeliness, among many other topics. She wrestled with how one can be the wife of a politician, a mother, a student, a lawyer and a feminist all at once. It is a sticky problem, and one for which she had not found an entirely satisfactory solution, which is perhaps indicative of the status of women during her time at 24 Sussex Drive and Stornoway.

There are only two biographical works that have as their subject a single Canadian prime minister's wife. The first, Margaret Trudeau by Arthur Johnson, was published in 1977, in the midst the furor that surrounded Trudeau's departure from her marriage. Johnson drew from many interviews with Trudeau herself to illuminate her life, especially the time she spent with Pierre. The third-party account of the time that Trudeau spent in the role of prime minister's wife summarized public and media opinions through the use of public opinion polls and articles written about Trudeau and her actions.

The second book is titled Mila, by Sally Armstrong. While it imparted much in the way of biographical information, it gave the sense of being very carefully edited. The repetitive focus on more superficial topics such as Mulroney's appearance and style like her bangs being described as "saucy" multiple times made this book seem like a "fluff" piece. However, it revealed much about its subject, as it is clear that it was the 'official' story that Mulroney wanted to be known. Armstrong tried to rebut or at least rail against much of the criticism leveled by the media against Mulroney, her husband, and her choices; the value of the work lies in that it privileged Mulroney's voice and articulated her reasons for the way she played the role of prime minister's wife.

There are a few books that try to give the reader a broader picture of prime ministers' wives by dealing with more than one woman as their subject. Wives of the Prime Ministers of Canada, Carol McLeod's collection of brief biographical sketches of every prime minister's wife since Confederation, published in 1985, often read like a "fan-zine;" there was little critical analysis or substance, one or two poignant stories, and an awful lot of unqualified admiration for the women she described. One virtue of her work was that she often quoted from letters and journals written by the prime ministers' wives and even sometimes by their husbands. Thus, McLeod was groundbreaking in that she gave women who were more or less silent in the minds of the public a voice of their own. This work is seminal inasmuch as it cleared the way for others to look more in depth at the prime ministers' wives, to go beyond just writing down who they were in the whirl of their husbands' careers.

In Political Wives: Wifestyles of the Rich and Infamous (or the Lives of Saints, as it was titled in the first edition) Susan Riley (first published in 1987) took a rather less reverent approach to biography/social history. She offered editorial commentary on the women and their choices, often mixed with a great deal of acid. She did not, as McLeod did, attempt to discuss every prime minister's wife since Confederation. She wrote about Margaret Trudeau, Maureen McTeer, Mila Mulroney, and, more briefly, Olive Diefenbaker and Maryon Pearson, and Nancy Reagan. She argued that prime minister's wives occupy an untenable and impossible place; criticism is leveled at them from all sides for any action or inaction and they are expected to be pretty dolls. She was aware of the obstacles faced by a woman who is thrust into the role. With irony and humour, Riley attempted to draw attention to what is required and expected of a prime minister's wife within a framework of thoughtful questions about women in Canadian society, feminism and anti-feminism.

Heather Robertson, with the publication in 1991 of More than a Rose: Prime Ministers, Wives, and Other Women, was the last Canadian writer to attempt a study of the wives of Canadian prime ministers. It was a much more ambitious work than the preceding social histories in that it covered most of the prime ministers' wives in Canadian history as well as some of the other important women in the lives of the prime ministers, and some women like Agnes MacPhail who were important in their own right to Canadian politics. Robertson clearly felt sorry for Margaret Trudeau but had little sympathy for "country girl" Maureen McTeer, who, according to Robertson, had "married up" when she joined forces with Joe Clark (1991: 324). Robertson also asserted, quite contrary to McTeer's biography published later that "Maureen was no scholar. She didn't go to university for intellectual discipline, or to blow her mind, she went for the 'piece of paper' […]" (1991: 318). Her treatment of Mila Mulroney was even more acerbic: "Mila didn't abdicate from the role of prime minister's wife, or repudiate it; she revealed The Wife for what she was, a straw figure carried through the streets to be blessed or stoned, depending on the public mood" (1991: 372).

The 1987 Friends in High Places: Politics and Patronage in the Mulroney Government by Claire Hoy dedicated a chapter, entitled "Imelda II" to Mila Mulroney. He recounted her popularity with many members of the press corps, the way people who were not positive about Mulroney were frozen out by the staff surrounding her, and, of course, her lavish spending habits. He asserted that she was the source of Mulroney's success, and that " the fact that Mulroney leans on her as his crutch, makes her far more powerful in political terms than wives of Canadian prime ministers have tended to be" (1991: 204). Hoy's chapter was not an out-and-out indictment of Mila Mulroney, but sought to reveal her part in the excesses of the Mulroney government. He quoted many articles and people surrounding the Mulroneys when discussing Mila Mulroney's role in politics and in the scandals that surrounded her husband's government.

In contrast to the other prime ministers' wives under discussion, there has been very little written about Aline Chrétien; her tenure came after the last of the omnibus books were written. She gave few interviews and kept a very low profile during her time at 24 Sussex. Although Jean Chrétien mentioned her regularly throughout his autobiography, Straight from the Heart, she was generally portrayed as a quiet presence in his life, only appearing as an incidental character in anecdotes: "I was so excited that I said to my wife, "Aline I will make these [sic] a national park for you"" (68). There are moments, though, that her influence shone through. He recounted a pivotal moment after his victory in his bid for the leadership of the party: "One night, unable to sleep, I had a long discussion about it with Aline. 'You're not the Chrétien that you were,' she said. 'There's something missing. You listen too much. You take too much advice. Why don't you just be yourself?' It was fantastic advice. When I returned to the office, I was ready to take charge" (229).

The two-volume biography of Jean Chrétien by Lawrence Martin investigated Aline Chrétien in more detail, explicitly attributing Jean's success to her: "[…] she was a unique force in his life […] (1995: 88). He described the couple's life together and tried to show the key moments or actions in which Aline changed Jean's course. By the end of the second volume, whenever Aline was mentioned, it was in a political rather than a personal context: "He and Aline had made up their minds that 'we were not to stay in politics forever'" (2003: 394); "He and Aline had many reasons for wanting to defend their fiercest loyalist" (2003: 402). As such, Martin's in-depth account of Jean Chrétien's life and career is a rich source of information on Aline Chrétien.

Conceptual Framework

Little writing, and even less scholarly writing, has been produced on the wives of Canada's prime ministers. The question that I seek to answer is "How is the role understood in Canada in the contemporary social/political milieu (1970s to the present)? What are its complexities and contradictions?" My argument in this thesis is that McTeer's observation that prime ministers' wives are expected to be quiet, supportive, well-dressed and smiling helpmates is in essence correct. In addition, I argue that each woman is judged on how well she embodies the expectations that have been created by her predecessors and by her social context. Sefchovitch's work on Mexico's *primera damas* could easily be applied to the Canadian context; prime ministers' wives are put in a contradictory and perhaps untenable position because the role is unofficial, unremunerated and unregulated, yet beset with sometimes contradictory expectations about both the public and private elements of the role. Watson's point on the conflict between the expectation that the woman in the role will be a 'modern' woman and a traditional wife is part of this contradiction (2000: 35).

In the following chapters I demonstrate from the vantage point of the women themselves (via their (auto)biographies) and from the vantage point of public opinion (via articles published in the Globe and Mail), how each of the women in this study struggled with the contradictions and ambiguities of the role and each attempted to resolve those contradictions and ambiguities, with varying degrees of success. Margaret Trudeau ultimately left her marriage and the role of prime minister's wife, having been defeated in her efforts to reconcile the public aspects of the role with her personal ambitions. Maureen McTeer's attempts to reconcile her personal beliefs (including feminism) and ambitions (for a career in law) with the role contradicted the traditional wifely role. Of all of the women in this study, Maureen McTeer has created a public and professional presence that is most independent of her husband. Mila Mulroney found that, even as a woman with no pretensions toward a paid career but with a very public persona, she could not escape criticism (indeed, she, of all the women under discussion, received the greatest quantity of negative press). Aline Chrétien is the woman who seems to have struggled least with the contradictions of the role. It may be that she, as the least public of the prime minister's wives in this study, was not subjected to the same scrutiny as the others. Despite her widely acknowledged influence on her husband and his political decisions, she presented the most compelling picture of a traditional wife and, as a woman of her generation, was simply not expected to be anything else.

Further, I consider Cherie Booth's assertion that: "[t]here is no job description for the Prime Minister's spouse because there is no job. But there is a unique position that provides for each holder an opportunity and a challenge. The opportunity is to support and, if possible, add value to the work of the PM; the challenge is to live up to the public's expectations of the role without doing any harm" (2004: 263). This finds resonance in the Canadian context. As I illustrate in the following chapters, each woman in her own particular manner seized the opportunity of supporting and adding value to the work of the prime minister in different ways while responding the challenge of living up to the public's expectations without doing any harm.

Germain Greer's observation that "[e]ven in England, however, just as there has been a gradual but intensifying trend toward presidential politics, with increasing emphasis on selling the prime ministerial candidate rather than his party and its policies, there is a new emphasis on political spouses" (1995: 24) reveals the increasingly public nature of the role in England, a trend that could easily be applied to Canada. For example, the lack of mention of Canada's prime minister's wives before Margaret Trudeau to the regular publication of articles about Margaret, Maureen, Mila, and even Aline who attempted to stay out of the press as much as possible illustrates this point.

This is a role that is hard to fill, and challenging to define. It is in many ways eminently flexible and constantly evolving, one, however, with public expectations, which, if contravened, result in criticism and even censure.

Methodology

In order to find the answers to my questions, I undertook an analysis based on a quantitative and qualitative analysis of Globe and Mail articles as a stand-in for public opinion because newspaper coverage reflects, to some extent, social norms thus revealing public expectations of the role and the performance of the prime minister's wife. Of course, media coverage is not a perfect reflection of public opinion. One theory of newsmaking argues that the media frames and distorts the news as it reports it, from selecting what events are covered to the tone of the article (Taras 1990: 7). David Taras argued that there is a constant struggle between the media and those they cover, that "it is a battle over who will control the public agenda and, ultimately, who will shape public opinion" (1990: 26). He also noted that the Globe and Mail is a national paper whose main target consumers are the elite, which also shapes what and how the Globe covers the news (1990: 51). Thus, it is important to recognize that although I hope to reveal the perceptions of and contradictions inherent in the role of the prime minister's wives, the media analysis I have undertaken has certain limitations.

I also included in my analysis the writing by each woman (in the cases of Margaret Trudeau and Maureen McTeer), the biography on Mila Mulroney by Armstrong, and articles on Aline Chrétien from the Globe and Mail and other publications. Watson's observation that the first lady's roles and responsibilities "have been driven largely by public opinion and other factors such as the particular inclinations and talents of individual first ladies, the events of the times, and the president's view of his spouse's job" (2000: 33) resonates in the Canadian context. For this reason, I have focused on information gleaned from the women's own voices which illuminate their 'particular inclinations' and reasons for making the choices they did in the role of prime minister's wife. This was particularly challenging in the case of Aline Chrétien, as there is no monograph written by her or about her. I drew on Globe and Mail archives to illustrate how social norms and gender-based expectations may have shaped the way each woman filled the role. Further, I have described each prime minister's position on his wife's role in his career based on biographies and the Globe and Mail material.

I pursued interviews with each of the women; I was successful in obtaining an interview only with Maureen McTeer. During that interview, she echoed many of the ideas she voiced in her autobiography. Since McTeer requested that I not tape record our conversation, I felt that quoting directly from her book would most accurately reflect the ideas we discussed. I referenced that interview when I introduced ideas in this work that were not covered in In My Own Name.

In each of the chapters that are about individual women, I give a brief biography and then a more detailed description of the woman's time in office. I include, where relevant, the data generated from my quantitative work in the Globe and Mail. I chose the Globe and Mail as my single source of articles for the media analysis because of its status as Canada's lone (until 1998) national newspaper. Needless to say, using a single source will have partially biased the results but using multiple sources would have increased the scope of work well beyond what was manageable for this project. I gleaned the articles published between 1971 and 1979 from the database "Globe and Mail: Canada's Heritage from 1844," and the articles published from 1979 to 2003 from the database "Factiva." Two databases were necessary because, while Factiva has a more sophisticated search engine, it only includes post-1979 Globe and Mail articles. Each article included in the study had to contain at least one full sentence with the prime minister's wife as its subject. This eliminated articles that made no more than a passing reference to the woman (for example, an article that contained only this reference to Margaret would not have been included in the study: "Pierre Trudeau attended with his wife, Margaret").

I also used specific search strings and date ranges for each of the women in this study. In the case of Margaret Trudeau, I used the search string "(Margaret or Maggie) and Trudeau" and limited the search to articles published between March 5, 1971 (the date of Margaret's marriage to Pierre) and March 5, 1977 (the date that Margaret and Pierre separated). I chose this span because it is the time during which Margaret was prime minister's wife, and the time span was long enough to give a thorough picture of her treatment in the Globe and Mail.

In the case of Maureen McTeer, I used the search string "Maureen and McTeer" and limited the search to articles published between February 22, 1976 (the date of Joe Clark's victory in the Progressive Conservative leadership campaign) to February 18, 1983 (the date that Joe Clark lost the Progressive Conservative leadership). I chose this span because it is the time during which Maureen was either wife of the leader of opposition or prime minister's wife. I decided to explore McTeer's time as wife of the leader of opposition in addition to her time as prime minister's wife because her time in 24 Sussex was only nine months—a very short time indeed. Further, her time as wife of the leader of opposition put her into the public eye and required her to interact with the public and the media in ways that illustrate her development as a public figure.

For Mila Mulroney, I used the search string "Mila and Mulroney" and limited the results to those articles published between June 11, 1983 (the date of

Brian's accession to leader of opposition) and September 8, 1993 (the date that Brian ceased to be Prime Minister of Canada). I chose to begin the span when Brian became leader of opposition because that is the beginning of Mila's rise in prominence in the media. Brian's time in opposition was short; the Progressive Conservatives won the election held in September of 1984, which place Mila in the role of prime minister's wife just over a year after she became the wife of the leader of opposition.

Finally, my search string for my research on Aline Chrétien was "Aline and Chrétien" and the articles were limited to those published between November 4, 1993 (the date Jean became prime minister) and December 11, 2003 (the date Jean resigned his post as prime minister).

In addition to the narrative/qualitative analysis that I undertook using the articles gleaned from my search of the Globe and Mail, I undertook a detailed quantitative analysis. This analysis consisted of a series of yes (1) or no (0) questions about each article. Some of the questions have revealed clear patterns in the media's portrayal of these women, such as surprisingly similar coverage of the four women in this study, all of whom had very different styles—this kind of similarity in coverage despite differences in style and actions demonstrates my argument regarding the contradictory nature of the role of prime minister's wife. All four women had very similar ratios of neutral, negative, and positive coverage. When the coverage did diverge for each of the women, it also emphasized the contradictions in expectations. Of course, changes in the political environment and social norms could account for some of the about-faces but not all of them. Margaret's negative feedback in the media came when she spoke about her personal ambitions and when she stepped beyond the usual bounds of protocol on state visits, while Maureen's professional ambitions received positive feedback. Margaret and Mila were regularly described as mothers, while Maureen and Aline were described much less often in relation to their motherhood. Mila Mulroney received much negative coverage regarding her use of an office on Parliament Hill, although Maureen was the prime minister's wife who actually initiated the practice and who did not get any negative coverage relating to her use of office space. Margaret was not criticized for the money she spent on decorating 24 Sussex Drive, while Mila's spending was scrutinized closely. Maureen was criticized for being too feminist, while Mila was criticized for being too traditional. This change could have been reflecting the effect of feminism on Canadian social mores, but Aline—arguably the most traditional wife under discussion—was never criticized for her private style of wifeliness.

Questions that were less fruitful are not included in the discussion that follows. The questions incorporated into this study are listed below. Of the questions that could have various possibilities for ways to answer the question, I have included more information on how I answered the question.

In attempting to ascertain how much coverage each woman got in the Globe and Mail, I asked: Was the subject prime minister's wife named in the headline of the article? Was the subject prime minister's wife mentioned in the article's first paragraph? Was the subject prime minister's wife the main focus of article?

The question of overall treatment by the Globe and Mail was meant to be answered with the following question: Was the article positive, negative or neutral overall in its treatment of the subject prime minister's wife?

In exploring how politically active the women were and whether their political activities were the way to garner media attention, I asked the following: Did the article focus on the political role of the subject prime minister's wife? In answering this question, I considered whether the woman was shown to be participating in a political event like a campaign stop, a party event, et cetera. Was the subject prime minister's wife characterized as political asset to the prime minister? Was the subject prime minister's wife portrayed as a political liability for the prime minister?

In exploring the way the media perceived and portrayed the prime minister's wife, I asked the following questions: Did the article focus on the profession of the prime minister's wife? I only asked this question in my analysis of the articles on Margaret Trudeau (who was searching for a paid profession later in her term) and Maureen McTeer (who was first studying to be a lawyer and then was accepted to the bar during her time in office). Was the subject prime minister's wife described as mother or in relation to motherhood? Did the article negatively, positively or neutrally mention the appearance of the subject prime minister's wife? Did the article mention decorating or household issues? Did the article mention the prime minister's wife in relation to her public role (for example, giving a speech, campaigning, receiving foreign dignitaries)? Did the article mention the prime minister's wife in relation to her private role (for example taking exams, buying a car, caring for children, going to the movies)?

I tabulated my results for this analysis using Microsoft Excel. The responses to each question for each article were carefully recorded. The sums of the "yeses" were divided by the total number of articles for each woman which resulted in a percentage that could be more appropriately compared to the other women under discussion. These results illuminate significant patterns in the Globe and Mail's treatment of the women. They also put to the test some of the women's own theories about how they were treated in the press (for example the breakdown of neutrally/positively/negatively toned articles showed that, while Margaret, Mila, and Maureen all claimed that they were negatively treated in the press, the majority of articles that mentioned them were neutral, and that the positive mentions in articles outnumbered the negative mentions).

I have organized the following work into chapters dedicated to each of the women under study: Margaret Trudeau, Maureen McTeer, Mila Mulroney and Aline Chrétien. These chapters include biographies of the women, narratives of their time in 'office' and analysis of the choices they made during their tenure. Following that is a chapter that encapsulates my quantitative and qualitative analyses of the Globe and Mail articles, comparing the treatment of all of the women in the articles and discussing the significance of the work. I chose to organize this work in this manner because I felt that it was necessary to understand the way each woman conducted herself in the role of prime minister's wife before comparisons could be made. However, I felt that the results of the

Globe and Mail analysis were best understood in the context of comparison between the women; it is interesting to know that references to Mila Mulroney as a mother were in 30 percent of the articles in this study but even more interesting when it is revealed that only 14 percent of the articles on Maureen McTeer referred to her role as a mother.

Conclusion

The following chapters, then, explore the evolution of the role of prime minister's wife in Canada from 1971 to 2003 through case studies of four women who filled the role during that time period. The case studies show that the role is poorly defined and is in constant flux; it is defined by the woman's own preferences and experiences, her husband's concept of the role, and public expectations. As a result of the complexity and fluidity of the role, each woman who has filled the role has struggled (to a greater or lesser degree) with how best to fill it and has encountered public criticism when she went beyond the (until then invisible) limits of the role. As Charlotte Gray observed in a 1992 Globe and Mail article, "Political wives always find themselves straitjacketed by expectations, as the wives of the last […] Canadian prime ministers will grimly testify. Each was stilettoed by those belittling adjectives—code words for sexist stereotypes—that any woman in the public eye seems to attract. Margaret Trudeau was trashed as "flaky"; Maureen McTeer was scorned as "strident"; […] Mila Mulroney is criticized for being an expensive ornament". This observation supports my argument that the role of prime minister's wife is one that is inherently contradictory if the incumbent attempts to play the role in public as well as in private. There is no winning, no matter what the style chosen by the woman who is filling the role—public opinion will always be able to find fault in the woman an in her choices for the 'office.' The lack of a job description, of set expectations for the public side of the role (or, indeed, how much of a public figure the prime minister's wife can or should be) make it easy for criticism to be leveled at the woman who is the prime minister's wife, as each woman struggles to define the role in the face of previous styles and the criticisms born of predecessors' choices. Indeed, the only choice that seems safe from criticism is to limit public involvement and to stay a private person.

Chapter Two: Margaret Trudeau

In this chapter, I explore Margaret Trudeau's time as prime minister's wife, her approach to the role, and public reaction (represented by the Globe and Mail's coverage) to the way she played the role. Margaret was ultimately defeated by the contradictions inherent in the role. She did not bring to the role a clear understanding of her approach. Indeed, she was ill prepared to make serious, thoughtful decisions about how she would be the prime minister's wife. Without that forethought, she was lost; she wanted to be famous and in the limelight without any of the repercussions that might have on a person's personal life. Also, she was unhappy in her life and in her role as "wife of".

Biography

Margaret was born in Vancouver in 1948 to Doris and James Sinclair. She was the fourth of five children (all girls) in the Sinclair family. James Sinclair was a prominent Liberal Member of Parliament and eventually a cabinet minister. She first made the acquaintance of Pierre Trudeau, a man 29 years her senior, in 1967 on a family vacation in Tahiti. Margaret graduated with a bachelor's degree in sociology from Simon Frasier University in 1968, the same year Pierre Trudeau was sworn in as Prime Minister of Canada. Margaret and Pierre started dating in 1970. By early 1971 they were married in a small private ceremony in Vancouver when Margaret was twenty-two, making her the youngest wife of a Prime Minister in Canadian history (McLeod, 1986: 143). Margaret spent the time between her engagement and her wedding in training. She converted to Catholicism and embarked upon a religious course of study suggested by Pierre;

she also attempted to learn French and became an excellent skier (Trudeau, 1981: 57-80).

Margaret was the first of the next three PM wives to redecorate 24 Sussex Drive (the official residence of the Prime Minister) to her taste, and spent her time trying to cope with the entrenched household staff (Trudeau, 1979: 112). When she felt the household was settled, Margaret then turned to the challenge of becoming a model prime minister's wife, taking lessons in etiquette and protocol from Mrs. Michener, the wife of the Governor General of the time (Trudeau, 1979: 140). Margaret states that she repeated advice she received from Mrs. Michener and Prince Philip like a mantra: "It is your duty. It's a vocation. Get it perfect" (Trudeau, 1979: 141). This advice is, I would argue, the mission statement handed to most political spouses, and when they veer from the course set by it, they get into trouble with the press and with the public. Unfortunately, as most prime ministers' wives have discovered, it is hard to get perfect what is not perfectly defined.

Justin, the Trudeaus' first child was born on Christmas Day 1971; the subsequent Christmas brought another son, Alexandre (Sacha), who is now a foreign correspondent for CBC. Michel (Micha) was born in 1976. Pierre and Margaret officially separated in the spring of 1977. On the weekend they separated, she famously spent a weekend in Toronto with the Rolling Stones. Margaret's autobiography, Beyond Reason was published in 1979 and a follow-up book, Consequences, was published in 1981. In those books, she described her attempts, in the first years of her marriage, to be the ideal Prime Minister's wife and hostess to the world. As time went on, however, as she claimed in her books, the relationship and its official duties became stifling and was the cause of much unhappiness and her bad public behaviour in the last years of her marriage (Trudeau, 1979: 193, Trudeau, 1981: 11); she was admitted to hospital in 1974 for "mental exhaustion" and in 1976 for treatment of depression.

After leaving Pierre, Margaret pursued careers, with little success, in photography and acting. She had expressed an interest in photography during the last years of their marriage and was briefly a photographer for People magazine. Margaret appeared in two fictional films, L'Ange gardien (1978) and Kings and Desperate Men: A Hostage Incident (1981) and is the subject of an episode entitled "Passion Before Reason: The Life and Times of Margaret Trudeau" (1998) of the Life and Times television series. In 1983, she became the host of a short-lived local television show, Margaret, in Ottawa.

In 1984, she was legally divorced from Pierre and married Fried Kemper, an Ottawa developer. In 1985, their son, Kyle, was born; Alicia was born in 1989. Micha Trudeau was killed in an avalanche in 1998, briefly thrusting Margaret into the spotlight again. Fried and Margaret were divorced in 1999. Margaret currently works with an NGO that focuses on the educating people about the issues surrounding the supply of clean water. She also offers her services as a public speaker on such topics as "Life with Pierre," "Redefining Priorities" and "Hard Choices" ("Margaret Trudeau.", 2005).

Margaret Trudeau in the role of prime minister's wife; media coverage

Margaret's relationship with the Canadian press began with the beginnings of her relationship with Pierre and continues to this day: Margaret and her sons were selected to be on the inaugural cover of the Canadian edition of the popular gossip magazine Hello in September 2006. The interview in the magazine featured Margaret, Justin and Sacha's fond recollections of Pierre.

Needless to say, the number of articles gleaned from my search of the Globe and Mail was large: 127. Of those articles, she was named in the headline of 53, or 42 percent of the articles. She was the primary focus of 43 percent of the articles and was mentioned in the first paragraph of 57 percent of the articles.

It is clear, at least from the Globe and Mail's coverage of her time in the role of prime minister's wife, that she was not treated as poorly in the press as she insisted in her books; her perception of poor treatment may either be because of other, less sympathetic news sources, or because Margaret remembers the critical pieces more than the neutral or the supportive articles. The majority of articles (51 percent) were neutral in their treatment of Margaret while only 16 percent of the articles analyzed in this study were negative and 33 per cent were positive. Indeed, only four negative articles appeared in the Globe and Mail between 1971 and November 1974.

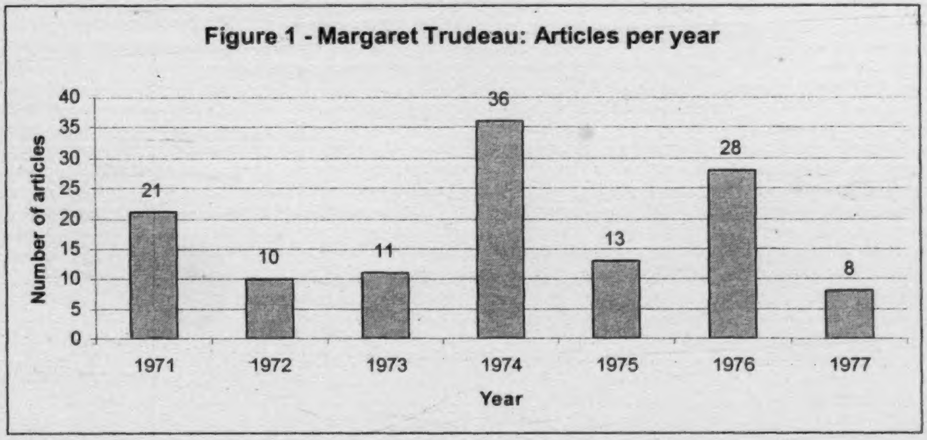
Unsurprisingly, the number of articles published in a given year and month that fell into my criteria rose and fell (see Table 1, below) depending on what events were occurring in Margaret's life. The largest number of articles in a month (13) were published during February 1976, during and after the Latin America tour when she made regular headlines for her activities on state visits to

Mexico, Venezuela, and Cuba. The second largest number of articles published in a month (9) was published during the 1974 election in June. October and November 1974, with 8 articles published each month, were busy for Margaret; she was hospitalized for 'mental exhaustion' and went on a state visit to France and a visit to Japan.

Table 1 - Margaret Trudeau: Number of Articles per Month

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
1971	x	x	6	0	2	1	2	2	2	2	0	4	21
1972	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	3	1	1	1	10
1973	0	0	0	1	0	3	1	0	2	2	1	1	11
1974	0	0	0	0	4	9	4	0	2	8	8	1	36
1975	2	1	2	4	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	13
1976	1	13	0	1	3	4	0	0	1	2	1	2	28
1977	1	6	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	8
													127

Figure 1 – Margaret Trudeau: Articles per Year



In the article announcing their wedding, Margaret's age of 22 was mentioned three times, once in the headline and twice in the first paragraph of the story (Canadian Press, 1971a). There was interest in her youth, even though the authors of the article did not go so far as to say that Pierre was too old for her. Overall, though, Margaret's age was mentioned in only 12 percent of the articles in this study and the gap in age between she and Pierre was only mentioned in 4 percent of the articles. Even as the media became less patient with Margaret's search for a role, they did not seem to factor her youth and inexperience into their criticisms of her.

Margaret did not have an idea of how she would approach the role of prime minister's wife because she did not understand what she was getting into when she agreed to marry a sitting prime minister. In Beyond Reason, she described her homecoming after her honeymoon: "My married life had begun, and with it the long, arduous task of learning to be chatelaine of 24 Sussex Drive" (99). She detailed the travails of learning to manage the household and the staff. She also went into great detail about the decorating changes she made to 24 Sussex and dwelt on decorating in both Beyond Reason and Consequences. Interestingly, decorating or household issues are only mentioned in 4 articles (3 percent); it obviously did not become a hot-button issue until the many decorating changes made by Maureen McTeer and Mila Mulroney—possibly because the issue of public debt or government spending had not come to the fore.

Margaret described her "first lesson in How To Be The Perfect Prime Minister's Wife" received from Mrs. Michener, the wife of the governor general, "who knew about these things" (Trudeau, 1979: 103). Margaret truly did not understand what she had come into and did not have a plan about how to cope with the changes in her life, as she states in both of her autobiographies. She depended upon the advice of Mrs. Michener for protocol and other lessons, while she let Pierre decide when and how she would appear publicly (at least for the first years).

Pierre believed strongly in a distinct split between the public and the private aspects of his life; in an article on Pierre's beliefs on the topic, Platiel describes how Pierre "[…] feels a politician should be judged on the basis of "the fruits of his labour" – not his private life" (Platiel, 1971). This belief must have guided his actions in regard to Margaret's involvement in his public life: "He put an embargo on me. I was absolutely taboo, not only for his office, but for everybody. No one was to come near me, no one was to pester me, or ask me questions. I was to give no interviews" (Trudeau, 1979: 102). Indeed, in an article published early in their marriage, Pierre is quoted as saying that he will not ask Margaret to campaign but if she wants to make a speech here or there, she is welcome to do so. "I certainly will do nothing to have her campaigning or to use her as a campaign asset […] The whole idea is repugnant to me" (Canadian Press, 1972b). Clearly, as his popularity lessened, he found it expedient to change his position on the matter (as we will see later in the discussion of the 1974 election).

Margaret's first official visit as the wife of the prime minister was to the Soviet Union, which she describes in Beyond Reason. She was unprepared for the visit, did not know what was expected of her and was given no help from Pierre's staff: "no one from his office came near me to brief me about what lay ahead…[they] probably gave little thought to the added complication of a young and ignorant wife" (Trudeau, 1979: 105).

In a Gallup poll conducted in October of 1971, the six out of ten of respondents said that they admired her for her youth, beauty and they believed that she had good sense, intelligence, and integrity (Johnson, 1977: 71). Johnson reported that respondents generally believed that she "was doing a good job with dignity in her role" (1977: 71). I have not encountered any other popularity polls for Margaret or the other women in this study. I think that it is interesting, though, that Margaret had such a wide approval rating when she had done little in a public or official capacity. She had not really even started interacting with the press because of Pierre's interdiction.

Despite Pierre's press 'embargo,' Margaret was named Canada's most newsworthy woman of the year by Canada's newspaper and broadcast women's editors and family-page editors. The margin, however, was not a big one. Most of the publicity that garnered this distinction came from the news of her wedding to Pierre and her presence on the state visit to the Soviet Union (Canadian Press, 1971b).

By the summer of 1972, Margaret was branching out in her public role; in an article that is the first published about her public role that did not describe diplomatic visits or political events reports that she was named as judge on art panel for UNICEF (Canadian Press, 1972a). Although there were comparatively few articles published in 1972 and 1973 about Margaret (10 in 1972 and 11 in 1973), she did not fall out of the public's eye. One society article in 1973 reports that a photo of a "modern Madonna and child" was attracting a steady stream of young mothers wanting to emulate that photo to the photography firm displaying a photo of Margaret and Justin (Cherry, 1973).

On the whole, Margaret was mentioned most (53 percent of the articles) in relation to non-political events of her own (such as the birth of her children, her marriage, visiting her parents, attending parties, giving interviews about her life and her emotional state, being named the honourary president of UNICEF or being a judge in a children's art contest, etc.) Reports in relation to political events of Pierre's were the next most common reason for Margaret to appear in the Globe and Mail, at 43 percent. This number does not match with the number of articles that mention Margaret's political role (23 percent) because, for example, an article discussing questions to Pierre during Question Period about Margaret's non-political activities (like her visit to Japan in November of 1974) were not coded as focusing on Margaret in her political role but were coded as her having been mentioned in relation to a political event of Pierre's.

Margaret granted her first radio interview in 1973 in the wake of a state visit to China. An article in the Globe and Mail reported the substance of the interview and gives some quotes. Her naïve statements illustrate her lack of political consciousness.

> [S]he found in the Chinese people 'a peacefulness and a dignity' which she did not expect. 'Perhaps it is the oriental way of keeping one's feelings inside, but there seemed to be a very relaxed and positive enthusiasm for their country which I hadn't expected to find.' She found Chinese women unattractive by western standards but kind, natural and without the inhibitions and self-consciousness you often find in western women ("Trudeau expresses…", 1973).

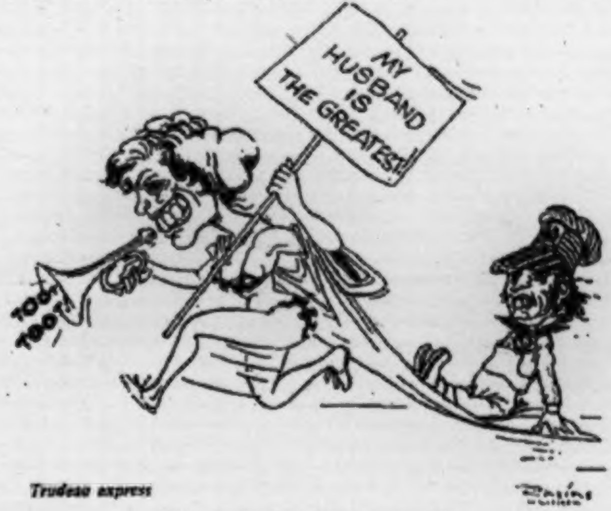
Based on the current sensitivities to ethnic, cultural and gender characteristics, this kind of statement made today in nationally broadcast radio program today would have brought with it a storm of angry responses.

Margaret was not interested in participating in Pierre's political life in the first years of their marriage. She was approached by the ladies of the Liberal Association to become their honourary president, join various committees, and play a part in the parliamentary wives' meetings—roles which she refused because "I didn't *feel* involved. I never had been a card-carrying Liberal. I couldn't seem to summon up any party fervor […]" (Trudeau, 1979: 161). Pierre supported her in her decision to keep her distance from this most usual way that wives of politicians got involved in their husbands' careers because "it fitted in perfectly with his policy of isolating me from his political work" (Trudeau, 1979: 161).

Margaret's involvement in politics dramatically changed in the summer of 1974. An election campaign was scheduled, and Pierre's popularity had been waning; his image was of a cold intellectual. "His manner with the public [the political pundits] told him, was too dry, too professorial, his voice to hard and cold. They expected rousing rhetoric; what they got was a boring, highly intelligent lecture. People simply thought him arrogant and aloof, a brilliant but cold man, abrupt and remote. Trudeau worship was over" (Trudeau, 1979: 166). Margaret's involvement in the campaign changed that. The strategy of using the politician's wife to soften the image of the politician himself was employed aggressively in the 1974 election campaign. Laura Bush is famous for this type of political effect, as is Mila Mulroney.

Margaret's effect on his image is widely credited with Pierre's victory in the 1974 election; Clarkson stated that, in addition to strategic policy announcements that made front-page news, "[l]ess successful at sweeping the front pages, but probably far more important to the campaign, was the Liberals' secret weapon: the prime minister's wife" (2005: 38). She made speeches that the media loved to talk about, with front page headlines like "Margaret calls PM 'a beautiful guy…who taught me a lot" (Wills, 1974). The same article concluded with "[w]hile often Mr. Trudeau is called arrogant, his wife said she had found him 'shy, modest and very, very kind'" (Wills, 1974). This cartoon encapsulates much of the sentiment around Margaret's involvement in the campaign and her exposure to the media—Pierre's victory was firmly placed on the tail of Margaret's housecoat (Rusins, 1974).

Figure 2 - "Trudeau Express" Cartoon


MY HUSBAND IS THE GREATEST!
TOOT TOOT
Rusins

Trudeau express

Rusins in the Ottawa Citizen, June 19.

Webster reported that "Margaret, who began the campaign as a decorative appendage, has become a centre stage performer. She regularly gives speeches at her husband's rallies, and she flies off on her own to campaign" (1974). He also noted that Pierre had not made any statements 'lately' about not using his family in an election (Webster, 1974). On the same day, another article reported that many people who attended a political rally for Pierre were actually there to see Margaret, who had been unable to attend. Indeed, the opening paragraph stated that "[t]he Pierre and Margaret show has lost one of its performers" ("Margaret watchers…", 1974). Margaret described the euphoria of her time in the limelight of the campaign machine: "[…] I made my own speeches and canvassed the streets. By then I too had become a Liberal political animal: I knew just what to say and when and how and I liked the way I was good at drawing crowds" (Trudeau, 1979: 172).

As a reflection of Margaret's general disengagement from politics, only a quarter of the articles in this study (30 articles or 24 percent) referred to Margaret in a political role, and only 7 percent mentioned her in relation to her own political event (like making a political speech independent of Pierre). Margaret was described a political asset in 12 percent of the articles in the study (most of these are during and after the 1974 campaign). Further, Margaret was only explicitly reported in my study as being a political problem for Pierre in 2 percent of the articles. Although the publication of Beyond Reason, during an election, was widely discussed in the media as having a negative influence on Pierre's results, Margaret and Pierre had by then separated and that coverage is not within the scope of my study.

Pierre's success in the campaign was not unmitigated by problems. In Beyond Reason, Margaret described how she waited to be acknowledged or thanked for her efforts the day after the victory: "I waited; and I waited. It was absurb of me—everyone was exhausted, why should they have thought of me? But something in me broke that day. I felt I had been used" (Trudeau, 1979: 173).

Margaret's fame had reached a new level after the election—it is after this period that the majority of articles that described her in some form or treat her as being a media personality were published. The number of such articles is 32, or 25 percent; only three such articles were published before June of 1974. As a product of her fame, the volume of her mail became unmanageable for her to handle personally, so Pierre assigned her an assistant from the Prime Minister's Office staff complement. The assistant took over the bulk of the correspondence, which had mixed results: "This way I missed all the hate letters that started to come in after some of my exploits on official tours. […] But I also missed all the encouraging ones, the ones that told me to keep fighting, that professed admiration for what I was doing" (Trudeau, 1979, 227). One of her "exploits on official tours" was Margaret's impromptu toast (a song composed and sung by Margaret) to the wife of the president of Venezuela at an official dinner.

She states that her "rebellion" started in 1974, after the election (Trudeau, 1979, 193). She had been feeling the strain of living in her role and was hospitalized for "mental exhaustion" in October of 1974. The Globe and Mail published selected transcripts from an interview she gave to the CTV program W5, in the wake of her hospitalization ("I get a bit confused…", 1974). In that interview, she noted that, while she prepared herself to be Pierre's wife, she was utterly unprepared to be the prime minister's wife. She discussed her confusion about what she is meant to do as the prime minister's wife—that there were myriad unwritten and unspoken expectations weighing on her at all times and she had no way of knowing how to live up to them. "If people could just tell me what they wanted, fine. Say yes or no, or go along with it or accept it" ("I get a bit confused…", 1974). She confessed that her anguish was partly the 'letdown after the campaign' and partially the lack of time for her to cope with the usual effects of post-partum depression (Sacha was only nine months old during the campaign). She averred that part of why she wanted to go to the hospital was to have a break from the strain of her daily life and to figure out what she was going to do for the next four years; "I found myself very thoughtful about what I as a human being could do in the next while at my husband's side…I didn't want to just be caught in the role of politician's wife" ("I a bit get confused…", 1974). She went on to say that she was annoyed by the press's attention during her hospitalization.

> In wanting, in trying to discover what kind of work I should do in the next four years, whether I should reach out a bit and try to do something in Canada on a more, you know, professional level, something, somehow getting the message out which I think I have. I found that this intrusion at the time, having to deal yet again with expectancies of people trying to figure me out when I was trying to figure myself out. I guess I was annoyed ("I get a bit confused…", 1974).

She also discussed with a total lack of self-consciousness her mysticism and her being a flower child.

In the wake of this telling interview, Geoffrey Stevens wrote an article arguing that Margaret Trudeau clearly did not know what she wanted; she said that she wanted privacy and to move from scrutiny of the public but she continued to seek out a public role. "She says she was unprepared for marriage to a Prime Minister, yet she has thrown herself into his political life with highly successful results. Her stay in the hospital suggests she is unable to handle the pressure of being a public figure, yet she will not relinquish the role" (Stevens, 1974a). Margaret's continued problems in separating her public and private roles is illustrated in that 74 percent of the articles that were part of my study referred to Margaret in her public capacity, while 51 percent referred to her in her private role. These two numbers do not add up to one hundred percent because her public and private roles would be mentioned in the same article (for example, she would be described as a mother in an article about her attendance at an official function).

Interestingly, Margaret was compared to other political wives in a very few articles. Only three articles compared her to a previous prime minister's wife (Agnes MacDonald twice and Olive Diefenbaker once). She was compared in nine articles to her contemporaries from different countries, like Pat Nixon, Betty Ford, Rosalyn Carter, Bernadette Chodron de Courcel Chirac (Jacques Chirac's wife), María Esther Zuno Echeverría (Luís Echeverría's wife) and Blanca Rodriguez Pérez (Carlos Pérez's wife). These comparisons were rarely negative—they were often in reference to appearances.

Margaret made some attempts at finding a place for herself in the public life of Canada, a place that was not necessarily a political one. One such attempt was an offer to Chatelaine magazine to write articles and contribute photos to that publication. While announced with delight by Chatelaine's editor in chief ("PM's wife is eager…", 1974), it met with out and out derision from columnist Geoffrey Stevens. Stevens, in a scathing article about Pierre, pointed out that Margaret's offer to do a photo spread and article on life at 24 Sussex was rather contradictory in the context of her recently declared desire for privacy (Stevens, 1974b). Shortly after this, Margaret announced that, because of the press reaction, she would not be doing any such work (Canadian Press, 1974a). An article published after this announcement reported the editor of Chatelaine's reaction:

> 'Other prime ministers' wives have accepted the fact of public life. I just find the whole thing ridiculous…Suddenly during the election Mrs. Trudeau is brought out of her plastic box and the after the election is put back in.' Mrs Anderson said she found it a bit bizarre that Mrs. Trudeau announces what she is going to do through the press (Canadian Press, 1974b).

At the end of 1974, Margaret was once again named Canada's most newsworthy woman by editors of women's news for daily newspapers and broadcasting stations. Her "activities as election campaigner, psychiatric patient, photographer and on-again-off-again magazine writer provided miles of copy for reporters" ("Margaret Trudeau tops…", 1974).

An article published in the spring of 1975 revealed that Pierre's stance on the public and private split had softened considerably. The article reported the substance of an interview he gave to the BBC in which he shared details on his personal life and personal choices. In that interview, Pierre revealed that he chose a young wife to 'bridge the generation gap,' not just between himself and the children he expected to have but also between himself and the electorate (Johnson, 1975). This seems to confirm the mercenary approach to his marriage that Margaret argued he had taken (Trudeau, 1981: 140).

Margaret's "rebellion," begun in 1974, continued apace in 1975. She stated in Beyond Reason that she was able to cover her increasingly erratic actions at home but when she was abroad and "surrounded often by as many as a hundred predatory reporters, [she] was a sitting duck" (194). The more Margaret spoke to reporters directly, the more imprudent she seemed to get about her comments. An article about a poolside conversation she had with a group of reporters while on a state visit to Jamaica recapped the topics covered and some of her comments (Jennings, 1975). The tone of the article was negative; although Jennings did not make any snide comment *per se*, the way he reported the conversation was one that was rather patronizing. However, the majority of the article was taken up with quotations of Margaret's statements. Many of them are silly, including descriptions of what kind of housework Pierre did (Jennings, 1975)—these kinds of statements are not the best way to separate the public from the private.

By early 1976, the kinds of actions Margaret started to take at official functions revealed her increasing disenchantment with the usual round of protocol and officialdom. She famously broke protocol and toasted the wife of Mexico's president, Mrs. Echevarria who returned the compliment by saying that Margaret was a wonderful person ("Margaret's toast…", 1976). Later on the same tour of Latin America, she toasted the wife of Venezuela's president and accompanied the toast with a song she wrote herself (Canadian Press, 1976a). On both occasions, she was praised by some and castigated by others in the press and by the public. At the end of the trip, she was unsurprisingly lambasted in Canadian media and the highest number of articles published that fit my study criteria appeared in February 1976, during and directly after the Latin America tour. She called in to a radio talk show to defend her actions, delivering the now-famous line that she wanted to be more than a rose in her husband's lapel. Stevens reported her 'erratic behaviour" during the Latin America tour and asserted that "One can fully understand Mrs. Trudeau's desire to be, as she put it on the hot-line show, more than a flower in her husband's lapel. But she cannot escape the fact that she is the wife of the prime minister. She seems to enjoy public attention, but not the pressure and the discipline that go with it" (Stevens, 1976). Beddoes, however, puts forward an opinion that is the polar opposite of Stevens's, averring that her "charming aberrations" in behaviour on the Latin America tour were much more appropriate than simply continuing to follow protocol like an automaton (1976).

I am much more inclined, however, to agree with Stevens in his evaluation of Margaret's behaviour. She stridently said over and over again in the press that what she desired more than anything else was her privacy. Maintenance of that privacy would have been fairly easy, as Aline Chrétien's time as prime minister's wife demonstrated, and as Margaret's first two years in the role indicated. Such rules as not chatting with the press, not giving interviews, not doing anything in public worthy of comment in the press, going about your business in the privacy of your home, and if you have to be in public, doing so in a way that does not attract attention, are ways to maintain privacy. But after the 1974 election and the constant exposure to the limelight, her fame had, perhaps, grown beyond her ability to keep her private and public lives separate. Also, Margaret admitted in her books that she wanted to be famous and in the limelight. She just did not want anyone judging her actions or decisions. And she didn't want to be constrained by being in the public's eye.

Margaret was striking out on her own more and more in the spring of 1976. She wanted to find her own cause, her own way. She gave interviews, she interviewed others, she became a water activist (a role she plays to this day). But she could not settle on a way to fulfill herself in her role of prime minister's wife. The Globe and Mail reported a further appearance on a radio talk show during which Margaret discussed her decision to change the way she was approaching her role as prime minister's wife. "She explained that her role means that people watch her all the time and, that being so, "I want them to see me as me." (Canadian Press, 1976b). She also said that "women spend too much time worrying about their dress and too little time worrying about what's coming out of their eyes. It is not how you look but how you are" (qtd. in Canadian Press, 1976). Interestingly, her books were full of descriptions and critiques of her appearance and the appearances of women with whom she came into contact.

An edited transcript of another television interview given by Margaret, this time to CBC, was printed in the Globe and Mail ("Growing old…", 1976). In it, Margaret was not very coherent in her discussion of her life, of her plans, of her message. It is unclear exactly why she wanted to give the interview, if not to be in the public eye via broadcast on national television.

She continued in 1976 to attempt to branch out; in June she interviewed an architect on CBC. Kirby's review of the article was harsh. He was condescending and blistering in his criticism of her abilities as an interviewer: "Margaret Trudeau is a sweet, sweet child but she's no TV interviewer. Her debut in that role [...] was a full fledged disaster. She did not interview [...] What she did was sit at [her subject's] feet, gurgling occasionally" (Kirby, 1976).

By October, the Prime Minister's Office tried to clamp down on coverage of Margaret and especially anything she did or said on airplanes during state visits (King, 1976). But she continued to generate copy; a caption on a photo of Margaret taking photos at a Nikon factory illustrated the press's growing derision of her attempts at professionalisation. "Margaret Trudeau takes picture in assembly shop of the Nikon camera firm in Tokyo yesterday. She was a given a new camera to add to the $3,000 worth of equipment given to her by Jordan's King Hussein. During the plant tour, Mrs. Trudeau tried to take pictures with one of her old cameras while lens cap was still on" ("Camera maker...", 1976). That the press did not take her attempts at becoming a photographer very seriously is illustrated by the few articles that referred to her in this role: only 13 articles referred to her in any way as a photographer or photographer in training. The reference was usually dismissive.

Even though 1976 saw the second highest number of articles published (28) that fit my criteria for this study, Margaret came in third in the running of annual "most newsworthy woman of the year" contest, after Flora MacDonald's being named Canada's most newsworthy woman and Maureen McTeer's second place standing ("Editors choose Flora…", 1976).. Margaret won her place by singing to Mrs. Perez at an official function (mentioned above).

The spring of 1977 was the last time Margaret participated in a state visit. When there was a furor in the American media about Margaret's choice of hemline at an official function (her dress was mid-calf at a black tie event where all the other dresses were floor length), an editorial that reported it in the Globe and Mail suggested that her choice was a manifestation of feminism in that a woman's clothing decisions did not need to be strictly dictated by the day's conventions in fashion—that freedom of choice was possible for women ("Behold what is flowering," 1977).

The advent of March 1977 brought Margaret and Pierre's separation. The coverage of Margaret's exploits (the coverage and the exploits both became more outrageous in the next couple of years) are not part of this study, as I have limited this discussion to her time in the role of prime minister's wife. A discussion of her behaviour and the media's treatment of her as estranged prime minister's wife is beyond the scope of this study.

Conclusion

Margaret Trudeau did not bring a clear understanding of the role to her time in office nor did she have a program for coping with the pressures, inherent contradictions of the role, or for accomplishing a specific goal. Margaret was not able to decide where to draw the line between public and private role and, consequently, was unhappy with the media's treatment of her life and her actions. She was not happy with the way she played the role.

The lack of a plan made Margaret vulnerable to whim—whim on her part and whim on Pierre's part. She went from being "taboo" to being Canada's (speechmaking, interview giving, publicity seeking) sweetheart during the 1974 election when Pierre's popularity needed a boost. She stated, however, that "I felt lost without a realistic role of my own" (Trudeau, 1981: 11). Her decision to leave Pierre was partly a decision to leave the role and what it had done to her: "It wasn't only that I hated the life—I had become a hateful person myself. A spoiled little bitch" (Trudeau, 1979: 240). The joint statement that they issued regarding their separation illuminates the need to stop being in the role: "Margaret relinquishes all privileges as the wife of the prime minister and wishes to leave the marriage and pursue an independent career" (Trudeau, 1979: 248)

Margaret's memoirs made it clear that she was unhappy with how she played the role of prime minister's wife, and that she was particularly unhappy about the way the media portrayed her. She described, in both Beyond Reason and Consequences, the way she frequently chaffed in the role of prime minister's wife, trying to break out with her own ideas and actions. She admitted that "it had begun to be clear to many Canadians that I was not temperamentally suited to the job of First Lady. Not long after Pierre and I were first married the strains of the life had begun to show. I became nervous, jittery, unpredictable" (Trudeau, 1981).

It is clear that Margaret wanted very badly to draw a line between her public and private lives but that she was not sure where the line needed to be drawn. "I hated being a public figure. I hated being recognized wherever I went.

I hated the way people felt they owned me, so that they could comment on my actions and beliefs with impunity as rudely and critically as they wished" (Trudeau, 1981: 11) But at the same time, she admits that "I like the limelight attention, people watching me: I can't shy away from that. I like an audience" (Trudeau, 1981: 191).

Margaret's evaluation of her performance in the role of prime minister's wife was that she "was not intended for political public life. None of it, not the people, nor the demands, nor the rules, nor even the rewards. They were not for me, and no matter how hard I tried, I could not shape my character to fit what was required of me.[...] You have to pay a price for living someone else's dreams: that of your own needs, desires and independence. It was too high a price for me" (Trudeau, 1981: 192).

Indeed, the contradictions that Margaret encountered in her public life were too much for her to handle. She found that moving beyond the role of quiet and pretty helpmate exposed her to public criticism and even ridicule. The press and public reacted generally quite well to her when she was, above all, her husband's supporter and cheerleader. When she attempted to move beyond that role in the public realm by attempting to become a celebrity in her own right, she found that it opened her to greater criticism than she had previously encountered when she was either quietly accompanying Pierre to events or making speeches supporting his bid for continued public office. This treatment may really be grounded in the belief that the wife of the prime minister is really only entitled to a limited celebrity—with the woman in the role only in the spotlight smiling quietly, one step behind her husband and in his shadow.

Chapter 3: Maureen McTeer

In this chapter, I explore Maureen McTeer's time as wife of the leader of opposition and as prime minister's wife and the ways in which she played the role. Although she was avidly involved in politics and before she and Joe started their relationship, Maureen admitted in her autobiography that she did not really understand what would be required of her a politician's wife and certainly not as the wife of the leader of the opposition and, later, prime minister's wife. While she made an effort to plan how she would fill her roles, her life and public reactions to her decisions often intervened. Her autobiography showed that she seemed to basically be happy with how she performed, despite her unhappiness with the contradictions that she encountered in the role. She was also unhappy with the way much of the public expectations of her in the role were gender-based, such as the negative reactions to her decision to keep her own name and her decisions regarding child-care arrangements.

Biography

Maureen McTeer was born in 1952 in Cumberland, Ontario to Bea and John McTeer. She attended the local French elementary school in a time when Anglophones simply did not send their children to French schools. She became bilingual, a skill that would serve her well in her political and academic life. John McTeer passed his passion for politics on to Maureen, who was on the executive of the youth chapter of the PC party in Ontario in high school. She proved herself a master debater in her high school and university days; she was able to win scholarships to the University of Ottawa for her Bachelor of Arts and, later, to that university's law school. According to her autobiography, McTeer's decision to pursue law was because she felt that it was "the best training for politics" (McTeer, 2003: 18). She reinforced this reasoning in a telephone interview with me (McTeer, 2006). Robertson claimed, however, that

> Maureen was no scholar. She didn't go to university for intellectual discipline, or to blow her mind, she went for the 'piece of paper,' her ticket to responsibility, and she scrabbled through law by cramming and borrowing other students' notes. She disliked law; she wanted to take a job with a cable-television station, but Joe, who had twice failed to graduate from law school, persuaded her that a law degree was a wise investment. Ms. McTeer was basically trying to please her husband (318).

This view of Maureen is not necessarily fair—few people would be able to go to class full time (or to really do anything else full time) when they are on the campaign trail, which is when she was borrowing other students' notes. And she had been pursuing law well before her marriage to Clark.

McTeer claimed that her feminist sensibilities were formed early in life (McTeer, 2003: 15), but that she was strongly influenced by the activism she encountered on campus and by the treatment of female students by the professors (McTeer, 2003: 51). She has self-identified often and volubly as a feminist during her time in the public eye. Susan Riley's chapter on Maureen McTeer was framed by McTeer's feminism and the reactions of various people to that feminism.

As part of her extensive political activities, Maureen partially financed her studies by working in the offices of PC Members of Parliament. She met Joe Clark, then a young and rookie MP, while working in his parliamentary office. They were married in 1973, the same year McTeer (who became famous later for not changing her name after their marriage) started law school. In 1976, Joe

Clark ran for leadership of the Progressive Conservatives; McTeer was heavily involved in campaigning, setting a pattern for almost every subsequent election in which Clark would run. Later that year, their only child, Catherine, was born; she now works in television. In 1978, McTeer began articling in a French language law firm in Ottawa. May 1979 saw Joe running for the office of prime minister. To everyone's surprise, Joe won. In September of 1979, Maureen decided to send their daughter to day care, to the country's horror, because of Maureen's busy work schedule. In December 1979, Joe's minority government fell; the election shortly after delivered defeat to the PCs.

McTeer was called to the Ontario bar in 1980 and later that year was named Woman of the Year by Chatelaine. In 1981, she formed a small art company which sponsored Canadian art exhibitions. In 1982, Joe resigned as party leader in an attempt to create a strong mandate for his leadership. This move led McTeer and Clark back on the campaign trail before the 1983 leadership convention. Brian Mulroney won the leadership race.

When forming his government in 1984, Mulroney named Joe to the post of Foreign Minister where he stayed until 1991, and for which the family travelled constantly. McTeer saw this travel as an international awakening and took many of the lessons she learned to heart. For example, she initiated the formation of a unique exchange program for law students and judges from Eastern and Central Europe in 1989.

In 1988, Maureen and Joe both ran for Parliament, he in Alberta, she in Ontario. He won and she lost. She chalked her loss up to resentment in Eastern

Ontario of the PC policy on free trade. She was appointed to the Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies in 1989 then removed from the Commission late in 1991. McTeer attributed her removal, along with several other members of the Commission, to fundamental differences with the Chair. McTeer started a Masters degree in Law at Dalhousie University, investigating issues around new reproductive technologies in the fall of 1991. In 1993, she was awarded the Canadian Bar Association's Rt. Hon. Louis St. Laurent Award for legal achievement.

In the fall of 1993, following Clark's announcement that he was leaving politics, she and Joe moved to Berkeley, where they were visiting scholars at the university, she at the School of Public Health, the in the Department of Canadian Studies. In 1997, McTeer was a guest lecturer at UBC in reproductive law. Because of her commitment to that position, she chose not to campaign with Joe when he ran for the leadership of the PC party in 1998 and in the subsequent federal election. Five years later, she accepted a position as a visiting research fellow in law at the University of Sheffield in England, where she would complete a second Master's degree. Maureen McTeer is currently an adjunct professor of law at the University of Ottawa. McTeer has published several books: Residences: Homes of Canada's Leaders (1982), Parliament: Canada's Democracy & How it Works (1987), The Tangled Womb: The Politics of Human Reproduction (1992), Tough choices: living and dying in the twenty-first century (1999), and In My Own Name (2003), her autobiography.

Maureen McTeer in the role of wife of the leader of opposition and prime minister's wife; media coverage

The total number of articles gleaned from my search of the Globe and Mail was 93. Of those, 23 were published during Maureen McTeer's (short) time as prime minister's wife. She was named in the headline of 29, or 31 percent of all of the articles that fit my criteria. She was the primary focus of 30 percent of the articles and mentioned in the first paragraph of 38 percent of the articles.

The majority of articles (55 percent) were neutral in their treatment of McTeer while only 12 percent of the articles analyzed in this study were negative. Thirty-two per cent were positive. It would seem that, although Maureen was regularly in the media, her perception of negative coverage of her time in the spotlight was not based on Globe and Mail articles.

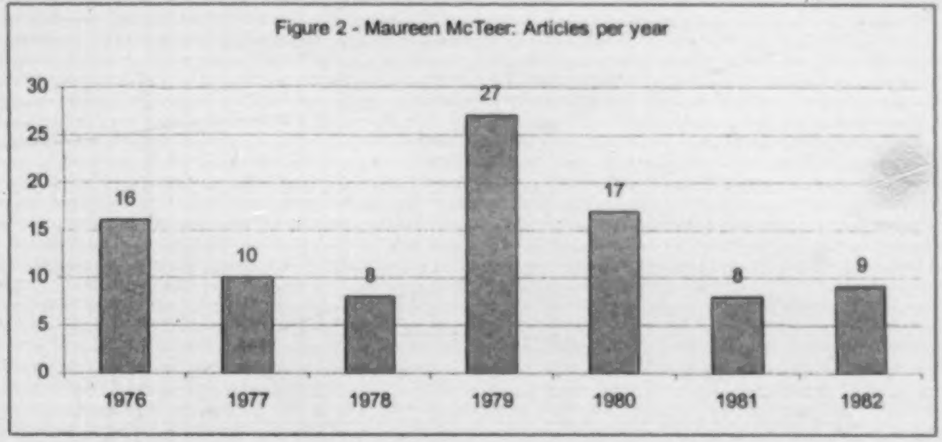
The largest number of articles that fit my study's criteria were published during McTeer's time as wife of the prime minister, with 27 published in 1979 and 17 published in 1980 (many articles having been published immediately before and immediately after her term). Sixteen were published in 1976, the first year that Joe Clark was elected leader of the opposition. The largest number of articles published in one month that fit my criteria (7) were published in April of 1979, at the beginning of the 1979 campaign. The second-largest number of articles in one month (5) was published in June of 1979, when Joe Clark claimed his office as prime minister.

Table 2 - Maureen McTeer: Articles per Month

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
1976	x	3	3	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	0	16
1977	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	2	1	1	1	9
1978	0	2	0	0	0	1	3	0	1	0	0	1	8
1979	1	1	1	7	2	5	3	4	0	0	1	2	27

1980	4	3	1	2	2	3	1	0	0	0	1	0	17
1981	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	2	2	1	8
1982	1	0	2	0	1	0	2	0	1	1	0	0	8
													93

Figure 3 – Maureen McTeer: Articles per Year



Maureen was compared to other prime minister's wives in 14 percent of the articles that mentioned her. Nine percent of the articles pronounced her to be a better prime minister's wife than Margaret Trudeau. She meditated on Margaret's legacy to her:

> I learned a great deal from her treatment by both the media and the public. I saw that the stereotype of a political wife as a quiet, supportive, well-dressed and smiling helpmate was still the norm and what most Canadians wanted. Margaret's behaviour would have a negative impact on my own relations later with the public and the media, affecting as it did the perception of the sense and seriousness of other young wives, and making it harder to be taken seriously (McTeer, 2003: 48).

In addition to the domestic comparisons, Maureen was also compared several times to Rosalyn Carter.

As can be seen from the above biography/chronology, Maureen McTeer is above all a political person. Her life before marriage was filled with partisan activity; she worked on elections with her father, who was a local Progressive

Conservative organizer when she was a teenager and continued that work as a young adult. She traveled around Quebec on behalf of the PCs to drum up support the summer between high school and university. During university, she worked as a party researcher and then as an assistant to Joe Clark. It was therefore natural that, after her marriage, she would continue with her political activities. Indeed, 39 articles (or 41per cent) reported McTeer's activities in her political role.

McTeer was heavily involved in Clark's campaigns, whether they were inside the party during his bids for leadership or in the wider arena during national elections. This involvement included such activities as speechmaking, touring with and without Joe, and the ever-important pressing the flesh, with and without Joe. One Globe and Mail article's headline is "Maureen, Queen of Mainstreet." This article described the kind of political asset Maureen McTeer was for Joe Clark (Simpson, 1979). In fact, Maureen described the 1974 campaign as "one of the most rewarding of my early life, where I proved I could contribute sound strategic and political advice as well as wifely support. [...] [W]e were equals and were unhindered by the presence of others competing for his attention and approval that would overshadow our working relationship later" (McTeer, 2003: 55).

For Maureen, each woman can bring something specific to the role of Prime Minister's wife. It is, in the end, a "highly personal role." Although, McTeer cautions, it is also a very political role, in which one can amass one's own "political constituency," one must remember that one remains at essence "the wife" (McTeer, 2006).

Maureen suggested that it was the press's newfound willingness to discuss the private lives of politicians that caught Margaret Trudeau in a media frenzy that then trickled down to McTeer herself (McTeer, 2003:47). While the media's predilection for looking into the private lives of public figures like politicians certainly was a factor in her fame, Maureen was making decisions that put her in the media spotlight from the time of her marriage to Joe Clark—regularly in unanticipated ways.

As part of what she thought of as her duties as a parliamentary wife, McTeer joined the PC Wives Association in 1973 (McTeer, 2003:48) (the name of which group was only changed in 1984 after the husband of a newly elected parliamentarian asked to join). Even before Clark's ascendance to party leader, McTeer's actions in this group got press coverage. She participated in a forum in 1975 and advocated for compensation for women whose political activities were dedicated to their husbands' careers (Canadian Press, 1975). In addition, she penned articles on topics of importance to her, published throughout her time in the spotlight, for the Globe and Mail and became a columnist for Chatelaine magazine. Indeed, Ms. McTeer was not retiring in her approach as a public person.

The run-up to the leadership convention that gave Joe the leadership of the party illustrates McTeer's involvement in his political life and her avid participation as a public figure in her own right. She traveled with Clark across the country, participating in party candidate forums and wooing delegates. She even acted as a type of French translator: "I would repeat the question slowly so that it looked as if I was the one needing to be sure I understood them" (McTeer, 2003:65). Her book featured a blow-by-blow description and analysis of the campaign and of the convention itself, giving the reader a fascinating look at the inner workings of such events.

That McTeer was not prepared for the successful results of their work is clearly illustrated by her description of the days following the convention. "I tried hard to return to normal. I did not realize it yet, but it was the beginning of a new stage in our lives, one that would change forever our previously peaceful and private existence" (McTeer, 2003:79).

One of the ways that her public life would change was that, as wife of the leader of opposition, McTeer was assigned a full-time assistant who looked after her travel and speaking arrangements (Sheppard, 1979). Upon McTeer's taking up the role of Prime Minister's wife, "The Conservative Party assigned her a secretary. Mila Mulroney, who in 1984 was given not only a secretary but also an executive assistant and an office, acknowledged that Maureen had made it easier for other prime ministers' wives by becoming so involved. According to Mila, the ground work laid by Maureen has ensured that no one now questions the right of the prime ministers' wife to have her own staff and to lead her own life" (McLeod, 1986: 154).

After Joe Clark won the leadership of the Progressive Conservative party, the media's attention shifted to Clark and McTeer in a significant way. McTeer reports that "[d]uring the months leading up to the convention, Carol Jamieson, our volunteer press adviser, did everything but sell herself to get any press coverage at all for Joe...Within hours [of winning] Joe had hundreds of media requests from across Canada and around the world. We were not prepared" (McTeer, 2003:74).

McTeer's evaluation of the scandal that followed regarding her decision to keep her name is that the press simply did not know enough about Clark to report about more interesting and important points in his political life. "Because the homework had not been done before [the win] there was a lot of scrambling. I mean, I can remember one national commentator saying to me the night after the victory, "I don't even know who your husband is." So the only story they had was the fact I used my name" (McTeer, 1983). The front page of the Toronto Star on 23 February 1976 featured the headline "Joe Who? 6 feet, 145 pounds of politics." The same page featured a story by the Canadian Press about McTeer with the headline "Leader's wife isn't Mrs. Clark but Ms. McTeer." The story gave basic biographic information on McTeer, described her "lustrous blue eyes," and how "she raised eyebrows at a session of parliamentary wives by suggesting that the wives who had to sacrifice careers of their own for their husbands' as a result of politics should be compensated"(Canadian Press, 1976c). The Globe and Mail also published a story about McTeer's choice to remain "McTeer." It was brief (with a large photo of Maureen herself above it) and simply reported the findings of an Ontario Law Commission report which stated that a woman is not obligated to change her name when she is married (Doyle, 1976). Joe's characteristic self-deprecating wit was used several times in relation to his take on her using her name "I have to say, I particularly appreciate her understanding in letting me continue to use my own name" (qtd. in "Clark is happy…", 1976).

The Globe and Mail's coverage was more in depth, considerably longer, and it described McTeer's history of political involvement and did not emphasize her appearance (one article mentioned what she was wearing after it described Joe Clark's clothing) (Cheveldayoff, 1976a). The three articles that featured a discussion about McTeer emphasized her participation from an early age in Progressive Conservative affairs and framed her as a party activist. Each article also discussed her status as a law student and contemplated what her professional and political ambitions would mean in light of Clark's victory. One headline was "Maureen McTeer won't disappear in Clark's shadow." (Cheveldayoff, 1976c). A subheadline for a story on Clark was "Law-student wife is strong-willed activist" (Cheveldayoff, 1976b). The coverage in the Globe and Mail in the days following Clark's victory was on the whole quite positive toward McTeer. In fact, the first article that negatively mentions McTeer did not appear until June of 1976; the next negatively-toned article was published in June of 1977.

Cheveldayoff reported that Clark's theory on the role of the prime minister's wife is to "'be her own person.' That means she can easily be a storefront or corporate lawyer but she is not sure whether a prime minister's wife should be involved in policy development […]. 'We have to be careful of conflict of interest,' he said cautiously" (1976b). Her profession continued to be a theme in the reportage around McTeer. She was described as a law student or lawyer in

30 articles, or 32 percent of the articles that mention her and her professional ambitions, as lawyer or writer were never sneered at in the same way that Margaret Trudeau's attempts at a career beyond prime minister's wife were.

McTeer stated that she was not certain how to present herself to the public and to the press at the beginning of her time in the public eye (Freedman, 1982). One example of this was her declaration at the press conference after Clark's victory that she was a feminist "and then a few seconds later corrected herself with "I'm not really a feminist," without explaining her quandary" (Cheveldayoff, 1976b). Despite this indecision early on, McTeer self-identified in her autobiography as a feminist, and, as I noted above in the biography section, Susan Riley's discussion of McTeer is framed by McTeer's feminism. Despite her self-characterization as a feminist, only 5 percent of the articles included in this study described her as such—perhaps this is because having a feminist in the role was too much of a contradiction for the press and the public.

Naturally, the media wanted to know about Maureen after Joe was elected the leader of the opposition, and he clearly did not put the same kind of publishing ban on Maureen that Pierre put on Margaret. Not only was she actively involved in his campaign, Maureen gave independent interviews. One profile included a great deal of personal information; how much their house cost, what temperature it was kept at, and what they did on their vacation to France (O'Neill, 1976). O'Neill also described McTeer's thoughts on her role in Clark's campaign and his decision to run for party leader: "I believe that when you do that type of thing you really have to do it together. If I was vehemently against it, he wouldn't have run," she said. Besides, she considered herself a moral and political asset to his campaign" (1976). Half of O'Neill's article described McTeer's stance on issues like birth control and rape, and, of course, her name. "Sure I could hide in a cupboard for the next 10 years," Maureen said. But she intends to express her personal opinion while recognizing that she attracts attention because of her husband's newsworthiness" (1976). The article was a strange blend of the minutia of the personal and the broad picture of the public roles that McTeer filled at the time.

Maureen's outspokenness, even early on in her public role, was newsworthy—perhaps because it took her beyond the expectation of the *quiet* helpmate that the political wife was meant to be. The Globe and Mail reported that, in the face of a by-election, "…Clark was asked whether he planned to help out [on the campaign]. Mr. Clark thought he would be pretty busy but his wife was an enthusiastic Ontario Conservative who would like get into the fray. That was enough to prompt nervous palpitations from some Tory organizers who are not quite sure how to deal with his wife's penchant for forthrightness" ("Historic possibilities…", 1976). Clark, however, clearly had no qualms about McTeer's involvement in his own campaigns: "Maureen has, of course, been a great help to me in my campaign and is going to continue to be" (qtd. in "Clark is happy…", 1976).

Even though the "name story" was what thrust McTeer into the public eye and was an issue that dogged her during Clark's time as party leader and as Prime Minister, she stayed there by virtue of her decisions to be involved in the politics that swirled around her husband as the leader of the opposition and to speak out on issues that were important to her. McTeer delivered a lecture to a group of law students in early 1977, during which she discussed the importance of having women elected to Parliament (McCallum, 1977). Having declared her feminism, she was invited to speak to professional women's groups (Porambo, 1977).

Even in the midst of coverage of her public life, personal reports continued. In an article reporting that Clark and McTeer were expecting their first child, several public and private details were given. Not only their wedding date, their ages, and the expected due date, but also that "Together they worked together to build up Mr. Clark's political career and he was elected as leader of the Progressive Conservative party earlier this year" ("PC leader and wife…", 1976). The article also reported that "[u]ntil recently, she was a law student at the University of Ottawa. But, because of the time spent campaigning away from her books, she failed her third-year law examinations" ("PC leader and wife…", 1976).

When Catherine, their daughter, was born, McTeer felt overwhelmed by what she perceived as her duties and by the overlapping of her public and private lives. "In the months after Catherine's birth in 1976, I found reconciling my private and public roles particularly difficult. I did my best to balance my new life as a young mother and wife of a prominent politician" (McTeer, 2003:83).

Maureen's struggles to cope with a new baby, her studies, and her role as wife of a prominent public figure (and, indeed, as a public figure herself) exacerbated her feelings of being overwhelmed and out of her depth. It is clear that she was unprepared for the pressures of motherhood in the public eye:

> "All women have to adapt to the monumental changes a new baby brings […] But usually they get to live these adjustments privately […] I see now that being constantly in the public eye was a huge part of the problem I faced at this crucial point. The press maintained an interest in our life, and Catherine's birth added to that […] At twenty-four, I was out of my depth and feeling very vulnerable" (McTeer, 2003:86).

McTeer's difficulties in balancing the public nature of the role, motherhood, and her professional obligations contrasted with Margaret's ease in projecting an image of beatific young mother and wife (until her 'rebellion' and split from Pierre).

In addition to campaigning, McTeer's role of wife of the leader of opposition included participating in party events and hosted functions at Stornoway for party members and for the press gallery, some of which were more successful than others. Derogatory comments about the clumsiness of the timing of these functions ("Jack Horner…", 1977) or about the inappropriateness of what was served or not served dogged her attempts at hosting.

> At our first press gallery lawn party in 1977 we chose strawberries and champagne, using local fruit and an excellent sparkling Ontario wine. That marked our "coming out" as the first public figures to highlight exclusively Canadian wines at an official reception. […] The press response, while laughable today, surprised and hurt me. We were accused of being cheap and not knowing how to entertain. I learned a valuable lesson from this (McTeer, 2003:81).

McTeer's reaction to the press coverage of her plans to feature Canadian goods did not stop her from continuing with that plan, which she continued enthusiastically during her time in 24 Sussex, but that it surprised her illustrates that she was not yet a seasoned public person with an understanding of how to maneuver the media to positively reflect the changes she was trying to effect in high-profile circles. However, not all of the coverage of her events was bad. For their first party, an article published on the topic in the Globe and Mail, featured complaining that many of the members of the gallery would be away for the event because of Prime Ministerial event abroad, but acknowledgement that the hospitality was appreciated because "[t]he best reporters have ever received at Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's residence at 24 Sussex Drive is coffee in the garage while they wait for premiers to emerge from federal-provincial meetings" ("Jack Horner…", 1977).

In addition to hosting events at Stornoway, McTeer McTeer participated in many events. They included hosting a radio show on CBC ("…Now here's Keith…", 1977), to hosting and attending ambassadorial events, greeting or hosting royalty (Cherry, 1979b) to attending fund raising dinners (Cherry, 1979b). She even christened ships (Cherry, 1979c). Not only did McTeer campaign for Clark specifically, she also campaigned for other Conservative candidates around the country (for example, Stephens, 1980). Her bilingualism made her a political asset, especially in Quebec—an article published in April of 1977 reported that she would be heading to Quebec to help in by-elections that were scheduled for later that spring because she is "more fluent than her husband in French" ("Ottawa rolls out…", 1977). Another article published in 1978 also reported her French to be a "major asset" (Canadian Press, 1978b). However, the Globe and Mail seemed to veer between regarding McTeer as an asset and a political problem for Joe Clark. An article published in October of 1977 reported that "[t]his time around an effort was made to reduce the chances of bad publicity.

Maureen McTeer stayed discreetly in the background and all requests for interviews with her were turned aside" (Gray, 1977). On the whole, however, more articles regarded her involvement as politically positive for Clark (18 per cent) than as politically negative for him (4 per cent).

Another of the ways that McTeer participated in the party's more serious side was that she served on the Conservative caucus committee on the status of women which was formed in the hopes of increasing representation by women in the party and in Parliament (Bell, 1978). Just as McTeer was involved in the Progressive Conservative party, the party tried to be involved with her and her decisions. One Globe and Mail article reported that McTeer's decision to use her own name was the subject of a motion put forward at a PC convention in 1978. But meeting chairman Nate Nurgitz said such a move would be "a bit of an unfair shot" at the national leader. "All she has done is stand behind Joe Clark when the party was up, stand behind him when it was down, and continue to be a mother, housewife, and supporter. And that's more than you can say for some other wives in public life." (qtd. in Canadian Press, 1978a).

In the lead up to the 1979 campaign, McTeer was "[…] introduced as our other leader to a rabid group of Progressive Conservatives […]" (Palango, 1978). Trudeau declared a summer campaign in 1979. The strategy for this one was to have Maureen participate in a parallel campaign to Joe's. While Maureen and Joe were enthusiastic about the idea, some party organizers were not.

> Before his death, my father had urged me to undertake a parallel campaign to Joe's, and I had decided I would. Joe had agreed and told the campaign organizers to see how this might be done. He suggested we start and end the campaign together and then have a specific strategy for my travel to

> meet several key objectives, including promoting women candidates; campaigning in Quebec, where my fluency in French was a real asset; and appearing at high schools and universities to urge young people to vote. This strategy was not uniformly popular, as some of the election team had never seen me campaign and worried that I would fail (McTeer, 2003:101-102).

Maureen's decision to campaign on her own was apparently newsworthy, perhaps because it contradicted the norm of quiet helpmate, smiling at her husband's side. One headline was "Maureen campaigns on her own" and the story described McTeer's travel plans for the following days ("Maureen campaigns…", 1979). Strangely, though, McTeer got very little press during this campaign—only two articles that fit my criteria were published in May, when the campaign would have been at its height. Once again, this may be attributed to her actions going beyond the norm of the quiet political wife. Despite this lack of coverage, Maureen proved to be an excellent campaigner; Jeffery Simpson opined that:

> […] Miss McTeer has become an important cog in the Conservative election machine. She is an excellent campaigner, in some ways superior to her husband in making a favorable first impression. She is so good, in fact, that Mr. Clark has taken to introducing her to audiences as the best campaigner on the Conservative team. In Quebec, her fluency in French is an enormous asset. When her husband gropes for a word or fidgets through an embarrassing silence, Miss McTeer can often provide the missing phrase. In Levis this week, she received even more applause than her husband when they were introduced individually (1979).

Robert Stanfield was quoted as saying that "Joseph Clark is fortunate to have a wife like Maureen McTeer. She's got her head screwed on pretty tight […] She's a sturdy girl. She was a good wife for the Leader of the Opposition, he said, and she'll make a good wife for a Prime Minister" (qtd. in Lavigne, 1979). The result of the 1979 campaign was to install McTeer and Clark in 24 Sussex Drive. Their time there was short, too short for McTeer to adapt fully to her situation and to really understand what she could do in the role. She entered the role not really understanding what it would entail, so, while she had some ideas about what she wanted to do, she was, for the most part, unprepared.

> I would be wrong to suggest that I came to the position of Prime Minister's wife with a personal agenda. That would have required more understanding of the potential of the role than I had at the time. I did know, though, that I wanted to make the home of the Prime Minister an elegant and accessible place for all Canadians, and set about doing just that […] Part of my goal of accessibility was to open 24 Sussex Drive to public tours the following summer during July and August, something that had never been done before, but that I felt would make Canadians feel a part of their Prime Minister's life" (McTeer, 2003:115).

Cherry's review of the party given to celebrate Clark's ascendance to the prime minister's office includes praise of a "lovely evening," with detailed descriptions of the all-Canadian fare—perhaps an illustration that McTeer had learned her lessons from hosting at Stornoway (Cherry, 1979a).

One of the first things Maureen did, as part of her program to make 24 Sussex more accessible was to re-decorate the house, to the lasting horror of Margaret Trudeau who called the renovations "depredations" (Trudeau, 1981: 117). Stevie Cameron wrote a lengthy article praising the new look of 24 Sussex, comparing the $15,000 cost to the amount spent by the Trudeaus (well over $300,000). The same article described the entertaining that Clark and McTeer undertook at their home:

> "They entertain a great deal - to give you an idea, they had seven receptions or dinners during the first five days here after Joe was sworn in

> and there have already been hundreds of people who have been to Harrington Lake this summer. So they wanted to make sure the house would work well for parties and receptions; they also wanted the house to look elegant, to be a family home, and above all, to be Canadian" (1979).

Maureen emphasized how much in conflict her personal and private lives were, especially as she tried to continue with her professional training. "Every day I was reminded how complicated my life had become. That fall my professional and private life seemed always at loggerheads, and I felt as though we were on a merry-go-round that sped up every time it should have been slowing down" (McTeer, 2003:119).

An article about Maureen McTeer published shortly after the election that made Joe Clark Prime Minister talked about the progress of her career, but the real focus of the article was 24 Sussex Drive—decorating decisions (including a comparison of expenses between Margaret Trudeau and McTeer) and staffing. It was an article that contrasted McTeer's professional life with her private life of mother and householder but did not make any judgments about that contrast (Canadian Press, 1979a).

Another article published in July of 1979 reported that McTeer was invited by a group of Aboriginal women to an official meeting between their group, the Minister for Indian Affairs, and the Prime Minister (Canadian Press, 1979b). The group was seeking equal Treaty rights under the *Indian Act* and hoped that McTeer, as a feminist, would support their cause; McTeer told the women that she supported their quest for equality. This situation would have posed interesting questions: how legitimate was McTeer's presence at the meeting? Should she have been making such open statements, even if they could not be construed as policy statements?

On the day before the confidence vote that ended Clark's time in the role of prime minister, "rumours began to spread to [Joe's] office that the government was in for a surprise. The rumours were not taken seriously by the staff" (McTeer, 2003:123). On the defeat, Maureen reported that she was "sick and confused" (McTeer, 2003:124). "The government's defeat on December 13, 1979, changed my life once again" (McTeer, 2003:125).

An article that was about the effect that the election would have on candidates included a sympathetic note about the effect it would have on McTeer and NDP candidate Bob Rae, both of whom were in the middle of bar admission exams ("Nomination battle…", 1979). When Maureen requested that she be allowed to suspend her participation in the bar admission exams, she was refused. She was furious that her circumstances were not taken into account and Joe encouraged her to fight the decision that would have her studying for exams while on the campaign trail but her friends advised against making a fuss. "They worried that a fight with the Law Society would reflect badly on Joe. When I raised it with him, he scoffed and told me to fight. But my friends' concerns were well taken. We were vulnerable and had just been defeated. We needed to focus on the election" (McTeer, 2003:126). A later article about the campaign reported that McTeer was bitter about the Law Society's decision and was, again, sympathetic to the obvious problems that writing the exams and campaigning were posing for McTeer ("Prize awaits Rae…", 1980).

The result of the 1980 election was Trudeau's return to the office of Prime Minister and Clark's return to the position of leader of opposition. The loss of the election obviously upset McTeer profoundly: "It would take me the better part of a year, though, to work through the impact of the election loss and the uprooting that moving twice in a year caused us. This was a very lonely time for me" (McTeer, 2003:139).

On proposing that she go away with a friend to Europe for a holiday, "Joe encouraged me, saying it would do me good just to be away where no one knew me" (McTeer, 2003:138). McTeer's plans for the holiday were reported in the Globe and Mail—such an article illustrated that if she did indeed want to be unknown, she would have to leave the country ("McTeer takes…", 1980). She enjoyed her private time in Europe so much so that "[…] being back in Canada was a shock after the anonymity and privacy that had marked my time in Europe" (McTeer, 2003:139).

After her return to Canada, McTeer continued to make overtly political statements at her speaking engagements—at the annual meeting of the Metro Toronto Children's Aid Society she encouraged her audience to lend their support to a private member's bill that was being debated in the House ("McTeer backs…", 1980). Her public involvement did not stop at speaking engagements and political entertaining; she was appointed to the board of governors of the University of Ottawa in the summer of 1980 (Canadian Press, 1980c). In a more traditional move, she opened an exhibit at the National Gallery of Canada and invited the artists featured in the exhibit to a reception at Stornoway (King, 1980a). Another article reported that she publicly called Senator Hays to task during an address to the Canadian Club regarding remarks he made during Constitutional Committee hearings that she considered to be insulting to women (Canadian Press, 1980d).

Maureen encountered one of her role's contradictions when she invited the women attending a conference on women and the constitution to use Stornoway for a reception and also attended a meeting that had the group attempting to decide what exactly they wanted regarding women's rights and the constitution (Mironowicz, 1981). She was surprised when she discovered that her views were not welcome: "I was hurt that my presence was seen not as that of a committed feminist, but rather as a mouthpiece for my political husband […]. Some women there actually booed and told me to sit down. I was upset and unprepared for this response and left the meeting […]. Obviously, at twenty-nine, I still had to learn how to play the political game" (McTeer, 2003:148-149).

She continued to campaign for the party and for Joe. In a by-election that was predicted to be a close contest between the Liberals and the PC's, "Federal leader Joe Clark has been in the riding, as has his wife, Maureen McTeer, a bevy of Tory frontbenchers and most of the federal Tory caucus from Ontario" (Rusk, 1981). It is clear from this quotation that Clark and McTeer did not campaign together but separately, using McTeer's high profile as a political boon in itself. Indeed, in a report on Laura Sabia's campaign activities, McTeer was mentioned as a campaigner before Flora MacDonald (an elected MP) was mentioned as having set out with the candidate ("Economy neglected…", 1981). In yet another article on by-elections, McTeer was mentioned first in an article about high-profile PC's streaming into a riding to assist in the campaign of Roch LaSalle in the hotly contested Quebec riding of Joliette; her bilingualism was specifically mentioned in the report of her planned activities in the riding (Canadian Press, 1981b). Another story described McTeer's heckling of a Liberal MP in the House of Commons from the speaker's gallery ("A sign of who's…", 1981).

While McTeer continued to campaign and to be involved in her husband's political career, she branched out professionally. She formed a company to promote Canadian art (Canadian Press, 1981a). The press coverage of her venture was not in any way snide (in contrast to the articles that reported Margaret Trudeau's attempts at working as a photographer, television interviewer, and actress); the articles discussed the company and McTeer's professional aspirations on this front neutrally or even positively.

Further, when her book on official residences came out in the fall of 1982, the press gave the book and her author tour supportive coverage. She described the therapeutic effect the tour had on her after the agonies she had experienced in the wake of the defeat. "The national tour I undertook that October and November to sell my first book was perfect therapy for my tattered sense of self […] It was one of the few periods since my marriage when partisan politics were far away and I felt strong and focused doing something that was my own". (McTeer, 2003:143).

Four articles appeared in the Globe and Mail that featured her activities around the book, and one article is the longest feature on her that appeared in the paper from the beginning of her time in the public's eye and the interview featured her thoughts on her time as wife of the leader of the opposition and as wife of the prime minister.

> I was 24 when Joe became the leader of the party. I don't think you can train for those things. It was a baptism of fire, if you will. I also felt, justifiably, that I wasn't well dealt with by the media. It was partly my fault. It didn't occur to me you were supposed to feed people stories. It was kind of naive on my part. I thought I was doing them a great favor by telling them how to improve. I feel more at peace with myself now than I have in a long time (Freedman, 1982).

She described her feelings about Joe Clark's defeat in 1980 and her evaluation of the way Margaret Trudeau described her in Consequences, which had also come out that fall. It is an interesting article because it focuses on her multifaceted public life while mixing in personal tidbits (Freedman, 1982).

Beyond her becoming an author and art dealer, further proof that McTeer had, by the end of Joe Clark's time as leader of the Progressive Conservative party, carved out her own public niche is exemplified in the article describing a speaking engagement she undertook during Clark's leadership campaign in 1983: "Miss McTeer was asked to speak on women and technology after a member of the charity's executive heard her talk about the topic, the organizer said. "We invited her here because of what she has to say as Maureen McTeer, not because of who her husband is."" (Canadian Press, 1983).

Conclusion

As I have demonstrated, Maureen attempted to supplement Joe's work through her own political activities and the way she conducted herself in their private lives. She gave in her memoir her evaluation of her time as wife of a politician in a high-profile role and admitted that she simply did not understand what the role entailed until she was actually in it (McTeer, 2003: 95). She followed this observation in her book with a list of the things she felt she needed to do in order for her to lead a happy life while in the high-pressure position of wife of leader of the opposition and prime minister.

> First, I would usually have to give in to the demands of his life and their imposition on my own. That has always been easier said than done, especially if I wanted to be taken seriously as a professional. Second, to withstand the loneliness and pressures that politics imposed on our family life, I would have to develop my own world where I could live and work and find solace and strength. Third, I would have to accept the primary responsibility for raising Catherine. Finally, I would have to insist that family time was built into Joe's schedule as much as possible. [...]I tackled each of these with different degrees of success (McTeer, 2003: 95-96).

As can be seen from the above quotation, Maureen struggled to balance her roles as wife, mother, and public figure while maintaining her professional ambitions and her personal happiness. Also, as I noted above, Maureen was also worked to reconcile her feminist sensibilities with the role of political wife; she tried to make the role one that allowed for the woman filling the role to speak her mind and to make a stand on the issues in which she believed. However, as the incident with the feminist meeting 1981, described above, illustrated, it was not always easy to be a social activist in the role.

The media coverage of Maureen's actions during the period under study was somewhat contradictory. While there was generally positive coverage of her professional ambitions and her personal choices (except keeping her own name and sending her daughter to daycare, two decisions that seemed to have gone well beyond what the media were willing to tolerate), her attempts at filling the traditional political wife role were criticized. Her hostessing decisions were questioned and her decorating choices for the official residences debated. Margaret Trudeau's campaign activities—especially when she gave speeches in support of her husband—were covered in detail and with a generally positive tone, while Maureen's independent activities were given little coverage. It is possible that her campaign strategy of traveling separately from Joe and speaking on issues that were important to her was not the way the media wanted to see a high-level political wife behave in her public role. If she was meant to be a quiet, smiling helpmate, Maureen McTeer did not entirely fit the bill. Although she did help Joe on his campaigns and in other political times, Maureen was too politically involved and too outspoken to entirely make the media comfortable with her even while they acknowledged that she was a skilled campaigner and a political asset.

Chapter 4: Mila Mulroney

In this chapter, I explore Mila Mulroney's time as prime minister's wife and the ways that she played the role. Mila Mulroney seemed to have a clear idea of how she would approach her duties (and, indeed, seemed to decide quickly what those duties would be). She made the role one that closely emulated the American first lady model, with a great deal of entertaining and charity work mixed in with her political involvement. The struggle that seemed to most distress Mila was the separation of the private and the public; she particularly resented the press's (and the public's) interest in and censure of her spending habits.

Biography

Milica (Mila is the diminutive of her given name) Pivnicki was born in Sarajevo to Bogdanka and Dimitrije Pivnicki in 1953; she is the oldest child in the family. Her father is a psychiatrist who was able to leave then-communist Yugoslavia to study in Canada at a hospital in Montreal when Mila was four. The rest of the family followed a year later, in 1958. The Pivnickis built a life for themselves within the Yugoslavian (specifically the Serbo-Croation) expatriates in Montreal. Although Mila and her siblings were sent to English schools, they made friends within Montreal's francophone community and became proficient in both official languages of their new country. In 1972, Mila started university at George Williams College (now Concordia University), where she started in Arts but switched to Civil Engineering after one semester.

Mila worked on the campaign of PC candidate Michael Meighan in that same year; she also met Brian Mulroney—famously—at the Westmount Tennis Club. She was nineteen and he was thirty-three. One year after meeting, they were married. Mila continued with her studies in engineering, despite the hectic entertaining schedule dictated by being married to an up and coming lawyer, and the birth of the Mulroneys' first child, Caroline. In 1974, Mila volunteered again for a Michael Meighan campaign. In 1975, Brian decided to run for the leadership of the national PC party, and Mila decided to drop out of school to campaign with him. She says that she regrets this decision, as she had one semester left before completing her degree and she never went back (Armstrong, 1992: 74). She was also pregnant with their second child, Benedict (Ben), who is now famous for hosting the popular television show Canadian Idol and CTV's eTalk Daily. The leadership convention was held in 1976, and Brian lost to Joe Clark. Three weeks after the defeat, Brian and Mila left ten-day-old Ben with her parents to go on a regrouping holiday to Florida, which cemented her image as a woman whose self-declared first priority is her husband (Armstrong, 1992: 179). Brian was offered a top job with the Iron Ore Company, which he accepted. The position provided the family with an influx of money in addition to many perks like having a company jet at the family's disposal, and "lifelong financial security;" it also gave the couple a taste of the jetset life (Armstrong, 1992: 80). Mark was born in 1979 in the midst of the Iron Ore days of travel and entertaining.

In 1983, Mila and Brian were back on the campaign trail, seeking the leadership of the national PC party; this time Brian won. He and Mila continued on to a successful national campaign which placed them in 24 Sussex Drive. Mila became infamous for her spending and shopping habits, for the money she spent on redecorating 24 Sussex Drive, and for the active and public role she played as part of Brian's time in office. During her reign as PM's wife, she and her husband described her role as that of a working mother. (Armstrong, 1992: 202, 225). Their last child, Nicolas, was born in 1985 while they were still at the head of the government. Mila secured an office and staff on Parliament Hill early in Brian's term to assist her in carrying out her duties as PM's wife. Armstrong noted that, in an average week, Mila "shakes three hundred hands, hosts two or three dinner parties and two or three lunches, one big reception [...] and half a dozen meeting over coffee or tea" (224). Armstrong stated that Mila advised Brian about the ways he should couch his image and what events he should attend (Armstrong, 1992: 124) and she was credited with giving Brian and the party a more human face (Armstrong, 1992: 125). Mila was said to have changed the way the PM's wife functioned, giving the role a more public image (Armstrong, 1992: 134). In other words, she stepped beyond the norm of the quiet helpmate. Mila Mulroney became well-known at the international level, with British newspapers discussing her wardrobe and Nancy Reagan counting her as a good friend and ally. Her charity of choice was one that raises money for research on cystic fibrosis; she has been involved with it since her early days in 24 Sussex and continues today. One book, Mila (1992), has been published about the famous wife of Brian Mulroney; it was written by the editor of Homemakers magazine. The Mulroneys retired to private life after Brian's retirement from the PM's job just before the 1993 election. They still make the society pages of American newspapers for their continued involvement in high society circles.

Mila Mulroney's time as prime minister's wife; media coverage

The sources that I used for illuminating Mila's time as prime minister's wife are her biography by Sally Armstrong and Globe and Mail articles. Although the biography was not written in the first person it is clear that Mila had a great deal of input into the manuscript. She obviously gave Armstrong many interviews, invited Armstrong to her home, her parents' home, and gave Armstrong contacts among her closest circle. Much of the text seems to be "setting the record straight" on the mini-scandals that came up during Mila's tenure in 24 Sussex Drive. Because of these observations, I believe that using this biography is as valid an exercise in seeking Mila's voice as if it were an autobiography.

My search of the Globe and Mail using my criteria for articles on Mila produced a large number of articles: 137. However, Mila was named in the headline of only 36, or 26 percent of the articles. She was the primary focus of 38 percent of the articles and mentioned in the first paragraph of 42 percent of the articles. The majority of articles (55 percent) were neutral in their treatment of Mila, while only 17 percent of the articles analyzed in this study were negative and 27 percent were positive. The negative coverage occurred mostly between 1987 and 1988. The negative coverage during that time centred on a scandal regarding the expense associated with re-decorating 24 Sussex Drive and another scandal that surfaced with allegations that Mila used her influence with the immigration department to hurry through the system the immigration application of a teacher at the school the Mulroney children attended.

Unsurprisingly, the numbers of articles published that fell into my criteria rose and fell (see Table 3, Figure 4 below) depending on what events were occurring in Mila's public life. The largest number of articles in a month (11) was published during September 1987. Not only was Mila implicated in a scandal that alleged that she had interfered in the immigration process for a teacher of one of the Mulroney children, but several articles appeared regarding her charitable activities. The second largest number of articles published in a month (6) occurred during the economic summit held in Ottawa in June of 1988. Mila's various hosting activities were reported during that time.

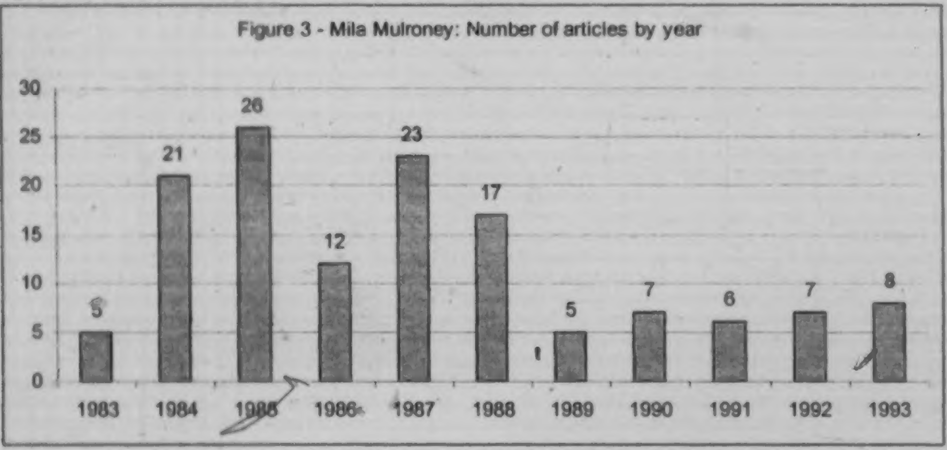
Mila was compared to other prime ministers' wives in only 9 percent of the articles that mentioned her. Further, only 4 percent declared that she was a better prime minister's wife than the women to whom she was compared. She was most often compared to Maureen McTeer but she was also occasionally compared to Margaret Trudeau and Maryon Pearson. One article stated "After unstable Margaret (Trudeau), unpleasant Maureen (McTeer-Clark) [...], pleasant, gorgeous, reliable, solid Mila is a welcome relief" ("Just what...", 1991).

Table 3 - Mila Mulroney: Articles per Month

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
1983	x	x	x	x	x	1	0	1	0	0	3	0	5
1984	1	0	2	0	1	2	3	3	2	3	2	2	21
1985	0	3	4	4	2	1	4	1	4	2	0	1	26
1986	1	1	2	2	2	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	12
1987	0	2	2	2	0	0	1	0	11	2	1	2	23
1988	1	0	3	1	5	6	0	0	0	1	0	0	17
1989	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	5

1990	0	2	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	7
1991	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	1	1	0	0	6
1992	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	3	0	0	0	1	7
1993	0	1	0	0	2	5	x	x	x	x	x	x	8
												Total	137

Figure 4 – Mila Mulroney: Number of Articles per Year



Mila Mulroney came to the position of political wife with experience as a corporate wife. While she had volunteered on a PC candidate's campaign as a teenager in Montreal, she was not particularly involved in politics. After her marriage to a man already established in his profession, she not only pursued her studies and motherhood, but also entertained Brian's clients and associates for the duration of their marriage before Brian decided to run for leader of the Progressive Conservative party the second time. In retrospect, Mila regarded that time as "a training program for the job she would ultimately hold as the wife of the prime minister of Canada" (Armstrong 1992: 49). She considered herself to be responsible for supporting Brian in his career, a role that she continued during his time in federal politics. She traveled a great deal with him even during his corporate years (Armstrong 1992: 49), so it is unsurprising that she would have continued to travel with him and support him as he entered the political arena.

Her involvement in Brian's first run at the PC leadership had been minimal, since she had been pregnant and caring for a toddler in addition to being a full time student (Armstrong, 1992: 100). The second time that Brian ran for the leadership of the PCs, in 1983, Mila "[…] knew she had a role to play. She felt Brian needed her and furthermore, she enjoyed herself on the hustings […]. She worked one hundred hours a week for four months" (Armstrong, 1992: 100-101).

Immediately after winning the leadership of his party, Brian turned his attention to winning a by-election so that he could also become a Member of Parliament. For Mila, "[a] new test began […] as the wife of the leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition. Meeting delegates individually had proved successful. Now she'd have to meet with voters on her own—a roomful at a time. It turned out she had an enviable ability to work a room" (Armstrong, 1992: 102).

It is clear from the first articles written about Mila that the Mulroney machine fed the press stories about her and she was an integral part of the political team. The first article that featured information about her included many details such as information on her education, her family, and the children. There were quotes from her in many of the stories. It is also clear that the reporters loved her. She was called "charming" a great deal—in fact, 11 of the 37 positive articles in my study were published between the time that Brian was elected leader of the opposition to the time he was elected prime minister. She was also touted as a real asset to Brian from the get-go; 9 of the 20 articles that describe her as a political asset were published during Brian's time in opposition and his bid for prime ministership. "Mila (Pivnicki) Mulroney is a tremendous campaign asset. Only 29 years old, she conveys a happy youthful image that her guests find refreshing after the seven sober years with the sometimes outspoken Maureen McTeer. Seldom more than an engaging smile leaves Mila Mulroney's lips" (Martin et al 1983).

Not only did the press love her, "[…] the consensus was that Mila Mulroney would be an enormous asset to the party […]" (Armstrong, 1992: 104). One PC organizer stated that "[…] as long as she's with Brian, she can make people love him" (Armstrong, 1992: 105). This was an overt acknowledgement of that softening of a male politician's image that has become an important role for a political wife. She seemed to find her feet easily in her new, more public role. "Life in the public eye took some adjusting to, but seasoned observers say Mila found her stride early and easily" (Armstrong, 1992: 105). There were none of the sorts of bumpy public incidents reported in the early articles on Mila that appeared regarding Margaret Trudeau's and Maureen McTeer's sallies into the public eye.

Armstrong reported that by the time the by-election came to its successful conclusion, "[…] Mila mania was in full swing. All the major magazines and newspapers carried articles about her. She began receiving dozens of requests […] to speak at functions" (106), so an assistant was hired to help with her engagements and correspondence.

Mila's very different approach to her position as compared to her predecessors can be noted by, among other things, her decision to narrate Peter the Wolf at a performance of the Victoria Symphony Orchestra (Canadian Press 1984a). It was the sort of publicity-grabbing activity that is usually reserved for a politician and just the sort of activity that ensured that Mila could not be characterized as a quiet helpmate. The move was a 'soft' kind of politics—her name was in the paper, her husband's name got in the paper but she was not shaking hands at a Tory barbecue. This event marked the beginning of her program to "eradicate the stereotyping of the political wife" (Armstrong, 1992: 107). Interestingly, her attempt at broadening the expectations of the public was actually simply shaping the role to fit a more American model of what a political wife did. Watson has outlined what he calls the "fundamental duties of the modern office" of first lady: wife and mother; public figure and celebrity; nation's social hostess; symbol of the American woman; White House manager and preservationist; campaigner; social advocate and champion of social causes; presidential spokesperson; presidential and political party booster; diplomat; and political and presidential partner.

Also, Mila was clearly thinking through her place in the public arena: "Mrs. Mulroney outlined the duties of an Opposition leader's wife, saying "she is subject to the same pressures and judged by the same standards as her husband." While there is a lot of prestige, but people "tend to overlook the fact that politics is very hard work.'"" (Martin 1984).

Mila's savvy when it came to media was demonstrated early in her tenure at Stornoway. After the redecorations that she commissioned were done, she invited members of the press to view the changes. She had press releases ready for them, with details on the provenance of the furniture. She also obliged them by posing for photographs. "The tour of the house was well received. Mila had passed the first test" (Armstrong, 1992: 111). The rest of her time at Stornoway, she made herself available to the press for interviews and photos regularly (Armstrong, 1992: 114). It seems that she took her role as a public figure seriously from the very beginning, with clear ideas about how to curry favour with reporters, but with an understanding that she would also attract criticism. "Mila function[ed] in a highly visible way. She decided in 1983 that she would be available to perform on behalf of her husband on the public stage. She knew that if she stepped on the stage she would invite personal criticism and that some people would dislike her performance" (Armstrong, 1992: 134). Having taken the decision to perform on the public stage Mila stepped into the public eye with little separation between public and private. Her main complaints on this front were when her extended family was subjected to scrutiny by the press and when her personal spending habits were criticized in the public forum. All in all, though, the vast majority of articles (81 percent) that were part of this study described her in her public role. Forty-three percent of the articles in this study described her in her private capacity, often as a mother. The two numbers above do not add up to 100 percent because many articles focused on Mila's public role but also discussed personal details or her private role. For example, the article might have been about Mila's participation in a campaign event but also discussed her philosophy on wifehood.

Mila participated as enthusiastically and visibly in the national campaign that placed her husband in the prime minister's office as she had in the by-election that won him his seat in Parliament. Her time on the campaign trail was as successful as her previous times on the hustings. After the victory, "Mila's next and critical test as political spouse was becoming the chatelaine at 24 Sussex Drive" (Armstrong, 1992: 114). It would appear that she did not have the kind of trouble that Margaret Trudeau and Maureen McTeer had. Armstrong did not report the same kinds of clashes with the staff in 24 Sussex, or even with the RCMP officers that were assigned to protect the family.

Indeed, the first article about Mila after the election that made her the "chatelaine of 24 Sussex Drive" described the excitement felt in Ottawa because there was sure to be an increase in parties and entertaining at 24 Sussex with Mrs. Mulroney at the helm. The article also described the many large parties given by the Mulroneys while they were resident at Stornoway (Canadian Press 1984b). The author of the article was right to anticipate the increase in parties at 24 Sussex: "From the day she moved into the residence, Mila's goal was to entertain as many Canadians as possible" (Armstrong, 1992: 232). Mila became widely known as an excellent hostess

In addition to entertaining, Mila established a pattern of writing an article for the Globe and Mail at the end of the year about a charity or cause that was important to her—once again a 'soft' kind of politics that got her name in the national newspaper without stirring up controversy of being overtly political.

That first year, she wrote about the importance of supporting the Special Olympics (Mulroney 1984).

The honeymoon between the press and Mila Mulroney seemed to be ending by the spring of 1985. The creation of an office with two staff members to support Mila in her duties was a bone of contention in the Globe and Mail. Several articles mentioned her office and it was an issue that seemed to pop up regularly for the time that she had the office. The beginning of the negative press on the office was in the regular column "Ottawa Scene," a digest of goings-on in Ottawa, on April 20, 1985. Other negative coverage followed; the issue was one that continued to pop up regularly for the rest of her 'term.' In defending the presence of her office and its accompanying staff, Mila stated that it cost the Canadian taxpayer nothing (because the office space had been unused, the staff were seconded from the Prime Minister's Office, and the furniture was her own). She also contended that the job of being the prime minister's wife was full time; the staff was needed because, among other things, she received over 500 letters a month (Cameron 1986b). While her arguments were true insofar as her needing a staff to carry out the duties that she had decided were part of her role but they did not seem to gain her much sympathy with the authors of the negative articles. Despite the negative press she received in 1985, she was named by Chatelaine magazine as woman of the year for that year. Obviously, the cooling attitude toward her that was displayed in the negative articles about her office was not universal in the media.

Shortly after Mila Mulroney moved into 24 Sussex Drive, she was approached by the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation to become honourary chair. She accepted, and took her role as fundraiser for her adopted charity very seriously. Not only did she attend and organize many high-end events, but she also arranged for flyers—with her picture on them—to put included in federal employees' pay envelopes (Cleroux 1986). The following excerpt from an article published in 1987 not only illustrated that Mila's efforts to raise money for and awareness about cystic fibrosis, but that the press was not always enthusiastic about her activities; the tone of the article is decidedly jaded.

> The Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Foundation acquired a far higher profile in 1985, its 25th anniversary, when Lathleen Morrison, the executive director, attracted Mila Mulroney as honorary chairman. Hundreds of causes clamored for Mulroney's attention, but CF was a do-gooder's dream: a killer of children, eclipsed only by cancer in the public consciousness, with steadily lengthening survival rates owing partly to world-class research by Canadians (Maynard 1987 03 13).

In the fall of 1986, she arranged for a special hockey game between the Edmonton Oilers and the Montreal Canadiens with a high end dinner for the 700 people who purchased the privilege for 2500 each—by convincing the owner of the Oilers to do her a "personal favour" (Cameron 1986a). She did not limit her fundraising activities to CF, though. For example, she was the honourary chair of the fundraising committee for Famous People Players, a charity often connected with Margaret Trudeau when she was PMW. She donated her silver earrings (which were sold for $700) to an auction to raise money for the Children's Wish Foundation (Canadian Press 1987a).

In addition to her charity work in Canada, Mila felt a strong need to spread her influence abroad. “Part of Mila’s international role [was] to encourage, promote, and publicize charities, institutions, and projects that she [felt] she [could] lend support to” (Armstrong, 1992: 161). She made a habit of visiting the local cystic fibrosis association if one existed and she also would also represent the Canadian government by presenting international organizations with the funding or other gifts that they had been selected by the Canadian government to receive. An interesting moment in Mila’s career was her promise to send Canadian aid to an orphanage while she was on a state visit to Jamaica—this was clearly a policy issue and not something that someone in her position could normally expect to make a decision on. Yet, the promise was given (“PM’s wife…” 1985). No stories were written about whether the aid came through, and the incident was not mentioned in Armstrong’s book. On a state visit to Zimbabwe in 1991, she visited an orphanage that needed $25,000 for a therapy program. By the end of her three-day visit, she had secured the funds from the Canadian International Development Agency (Armstrong, 1992: 163).

Mila was generally popular on the international media scene for her image and not for her charity work. It was with bizarre pride that the Globe and Mail reported that “[t]he visit by Mr. Mulroney and his wife, Mila, has been treated by the U.S. media as a glittering social event” (Johnson et al 1986). In 1991, the Globe and Mail reported the extensive coverage given by the British media to Mila and Caroline Mulroney at a G7 summit in London. Some of the quotes include the Star’s ““And the star of the show was sexy Mila Mulroney,” and "stunning Mrs. Mulroney, legs right up to her Chanel earrings, smiled the public smile of her fellow First Ladies" (qtd. in Koring, 1991). She was also popular with her counterparts from around the world (Armstrong, 1992: 154).

Mila occasionally became active on policy issues. For example, "[w]hen a decision was finally reached to leave the baby bonus untouched, a move that seemed to undercut the position of Finance Minister Michael Wilson, Mr. Mulroney was able to say that his pregnant wife, Mila, had played a role in the debate" (Sallot, 1985). Another time, Mila, along with 102 other spouses of MPs and Senators, was part of a lobbying effort organized by the Parliamentary Spouses Association to change child sex abuse laws (Canadian Press 1987a).

In addition to these occasion bouts of activism, Mila also seemed to take on the role of a prime ministerial aide or attaché; she would meet with people who wanted to meet with the PM (Martin 1987), although this role occasionally got her into trouble with the media. As previously noted, a brief scandal that stirred up negative media coverage for Mila was when a federal employee union official claimed that Mila had intervened in an immigration case, causing officials to be ordered to speed up processing of the application of one of the teachers from the Mulroney children's school (Cleroux 1987). The Prime Minister's Office countered the accusation by saying that Mila forwarding the letter to the immigration department was perfectly legitimate and that she did not actively interfere in the process (Malarek 1987). Stevie Cameron followed up the articles on the immigration debacle with a feature article on the way correspondence was dealt with from Mila Mulroney's office; it is clear that Cameron was questioning

Mila's right to be in any way a part of the machinery of the Prime Minister's Office machinery. "Is the Prime Minister's wife a kind of last-chance ombudswoman, a St. Jude-among-the- bureaucrats? Or is she simply meddling unacceptably in the public service?" (1987). An editorial from the Globe and Mail was published which castigated the whole debacle and described the details surrounding the case. The conclusion? "This was more than the routine forwarding of a constituent's request, and whoever was involved in sending that signal - whether it was Mrs. Mulroney or someone else - has misused the PMO's power and influence." ("The immigration hop" 1987). Simpson offered his opinion on the matter: "[f]or several days this week, the opposition and elements of the media seized on this affair, presumably as a further illustration of the cronyism, favoritism and general lack of ethical purity and moral probity of the Mulroney government," but, looked at with a cool head, he suggest, there was little to recommend the case as scandalous (1987). While that may have been the case, the issue was still dogging the Mulroney government in December, as Opposition parties continued to call for an official probe into the matter (Wilson, 1987). Interestingly, the incident was not mentioned in Armstrong's book.

Mila Mulroney's spending habits were regularly mentioned in the Globe and Mail (at least one article a year mentioned her spending habits, with a peak of 5 articles in 1985) and were discussed at length in the books that describe her time in office. Sometimes, these habits were indulgently represented and other times they were intimated to be outrageous. This strange fixation on a personal habit—at least as far as clothing and jewelry went—is an example of the contradictions that a prime minister's wife must contend with. She was generally praised for her elegant appearance but was castigated for frequently getting her hair cut and owning 100 pairs of shoes. Granted, when her expensive tastes spilled over to the decorating bills for 24 Sussex, this criticism was more appropriately grounded in the public sphere. But whether she chose to pay $5000 or $50 for a dress is, I think, a matter of personal decision. In a book review on a tell-all book on Brian Mulroney's life pre-politics, Lysianne Gagnon summarizes nicely the contradictions regarding the interest in Mila Mulroney's shopping habits:

> Needless to say—this is a staple of everything that is written about the Mulroneys in the English-Canadian press—Mila Mulroney's love for fashionable clothes is described as though it were a cardinal sin, even though no taxpayer's money is involved. This poor woman will never be forgiven for being pretty and wanting to look at her best when she goes out (Gagnon, 1991).

Armstrong's book described Mila's shopping habits in detail and defended them. Mila's argument was, simply, that she was spending private money and that her spending was her own affair (Armstrong, 1992: 152). However, Armstrong detailed the cost of one of the outfits that Mila wore at an international summit in London to illustrate that it did not cost as much as speculated in the press—the source of the exact amounts paid for each item could only have been Mila herself (1992: 174).

Mila's position as a political asset continued from the first leadership campaign in which she participated. The voters were charmed by her. The press (for the most part) loved her. Her influence on Brian was widely regarded as positive. Forty-eight percent of the articles in this study focused on her political role. Fourteen percent had specific reference to her being a political asset to

Brian, while there were no articles that suggested that she was a political liability. Of the articles that state that she was an asset to him, they are glowing in their praises of her political acumen. Further, the few articles that discuss Mila's influence on Brian (only 7 percent) are also glowing in their praise of her. For example, Simpson wrote:

> Mila Mulroney, 13 years younger than her husband, has had by all accounts a remarkably steadying influence on him. She helps moderate his mood swings and remains a superior campaigner, as anyone will attest who has seen her work a room. No one who has worked with the Prime Minister can point to any influence she has exercised over policy - we're not dealing here with a Nancy Reagan - but everyone suggests she is a shrewd judge of character (Simpson 1988).

By the end of Brian's term, Mila's image in the public sphere was in much better condition than her husband's: "[w]ith (the Prime Minister's) popularity standing at an all-time low of around 12 per cent in the polls, she is endlessly more popular than he - and, many say, more politically astute . . ." ("British newspapers…", 1991). While her popularity was at a higher level than Brian's, "Canadians are totally ambivalent about Mila. On the one hand, there is resentment because she behaves like a princess. On the other hand, she is the picture-perfect political wife and, after her predecessors, it's considered wonderful that we have such a glamorous figure alongside the PM'" (Gray, qtd. in "British newspapers…", 1991). It may have been the influence of feminism that there was public concern about the 'princess' role but I am inclined to believe that it is more likely that the criticisms stemmed from her compromising the expectation that the prime minister's wife was fundamentally a quiet and private person.

By the spring of 1992, the press was becoming more censorious and less indulgent of Mila's glamourous ways. One article described in scathing fashion the tax break Mila received for donating two dresses to a museum at McGill University (Freeman 1992). However, of the 21 articles published from 1991 to 1993 that fit my criteria, only 5 were negative—hardly an overwhelming amount of negative coverage.

Conclusion

Mila Mulroney came to the role of prime minister's wife with a clear plan for being deeply involved in her husband's public duties while pursuing a public role—generally as a woman involved with charities—independent of the prime minister. She planned to entertain constantly at the official residence, which she did. She decided that she would be available to the press for interviews and for photos, realizing that taking such steps would not only raise her profile but would also open her to criticism, but she still resented that the media was so very interested in her spending habits. Was she happy with how she had played the role? The overall impression that comes from Armstrong's book, which was obviously strongly influenced by what Mila wanted to respond to in the media and what she wanted the public to know about her, is that she was happy with the decisions that she made during her time as prime minister's wife. Jeffrey Simpson, a prominent Globe and Mail columnist summed up her time in office: "[Mila Mulroney] discharged her public role with distinction" (1993), but he did not explain why he thought so.

While Mila Mulroney largely conformed to the traditional duties of wife and mother and to the norm of "quiet, supportive, well-dressed and smiling helpmate" (McTeer 2004: 48), she went well beyond the 'quiet' part of the norm while supporting her husband. She encountered criticism that was based in the feminist idea that a woman was meant to define herself beyond her roles as wife and mother but also encountered criticism when she was perceived to have gone beyond the legitimate purview of a prime minister's wife (as in the case of the immigration scandal or the occupation of an office and use of Prime Minister's Office staff to assist her in her duties).

Chapter 5: Aline Chrétien

In this chapter, I explore Aline Chrétien's performance of the role of prime minister's wife. As a woman in her late fifties who had spent decades in the political world and especially as a high-ranking minister's wife, she would have had a good idea of how she wanted to fill the role. The main decision that she seemed to have made was that she would support Jean but would not open herself or her life to the press. She kept to her resolve, rarely giving interviews, and releasing bare-bones biographical information about herself. She was not unduly discommoded by her role; she said that her decade as prime minister's wife constituted "the best years of her life." In interviews given as Jean was preparing to hand over the reins of power to Paul Martin, Aline expressed no regrets about how she had played the role and did not complain about the contradictions or complexity of the role.

Biography

Of the women under discussion, Aline Chrétien's biography is the most difficult to write. There is no book written about her or by her, and she has given few interviews. The basics are often repeated, as little else is made public. Here, however, are the facts as they have been reported. Aline Chaine was born in Shawinigan in 1936, into a working class family, with a hairdresser mother and a labourer father. She was the eldest of six children, so decided at sixteen to enter an accelerated course to become a bilingual secretary; she finished at the top of her class and found a job immediately. She met Jean Chrétien the year before, when she was fifteen and he was seventeen. They were married in 1957, when

Aline was twenty-one and Jean was in law school at Laval. She stopped working when their daughter France was born. Two miscarriages followed, but she became pregnant with their son Hubert in 1965. Under doctor's orders to be restful, Aline learned Spanish, a language she now speaks fluently. She went on to learn Italian fluently as well. The Chrétiens' third child, Michel, a Gwich'in Indian, was adopted from an orphanage in the Northwest Territories in the 1972 during Jean's time as Minister of Northern and Indian Affairs. Michel has been in the news for several serious run-ins with the law, while the other children have kept low public profiles. France Chrétien is married to the head of a large and influential company.

Jean was first elected to Parliament in 1963, beginning a long career in federal politics. Aline kept a very low profile from the time Jean was elected as an member of Parliament, including the time he spent as leader of the opposition. Even when Jean was prime minister, she was not the kind of media personality that her predecessors since Margaret Trudeau had been. Occasionally, however, Aline made headlines. For example in 1995, she discovered an intruder in 24 Sussex Drive in the middle of the night, calmly went back to her bedroom, locked the door and woke Jean up (who picked up a soapstone statue as a weapon in case the intruder decided to try to break the door down), and called the police. In 1999, she hosted the conference for spouses of the heads of state of the Organization of American States, the theme of the conference was "Women of the Americas: Agents of Change." Aline was awarded an honorary doctor of laws degree from Laurentian University in 2003, for her "tolerance, flexibility and courage to work on an international stage" (Canadian Press "Prime Minister's wife…"). She and Jean now divide their time between Ottawa and Montreal.

Aline Chrétien's time as prime minister's wife; media coverage

The sources that I use for discussing Aline's time as prime minister's wife are the various articles that were written about her in difference media sources, including the Globe and Mail articles that were an integral part of this study. I also refer to some of the books written about Jean Chrétien. The difficulty in writing about Aline is that it is hard to find her voice, as she actively avoided the spotlight.

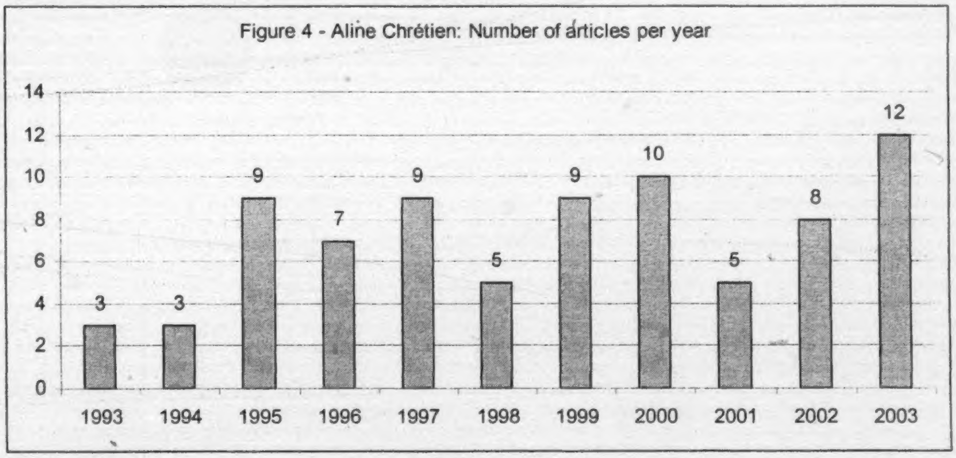
Eighty articles fell into my criteria for inclusion in this study. This number is comparatively small, considering that, of the four women under discussion, Aline was the longest-serving prime minister's wife, at 10 years in office. Of those articles, she is named in the headline of 18 percent of the articles. She is the primary focus of 16 percent of the articles and mentioned in the first paragraph of 16 percent of the articles. Fifty-eight percent of the articles were neutral in their treatment of Aline while only 8 percent of the articles analyzed in this study were negative and 35 per cent were positive. Even the negative articles were not scathing in their criticisms of her.

Unsurprisingly, the numbers of articles published that fell into my criteria rose and fell (see Table 4, below) depending on what was happening with Aline. The largest number of articles in a month (8) were published during November 1995, when she discovered an intruder in 24 Sussex Drive in the middle of the night. The incident not only raised questions about the security surrounding the prime minister, but served as a famous anecdote for the press to remind the public of during the rest of Jean's career; the coverage generally noted that this incident displayed Aline's cool head in a crisis and the steely resolve that was hidden below her quiet exterior. Fourteen percent of the articles that fell into the criteria of this study mentioned the incident, from the time it happened to the time that Jean stepped down. The second largest number of articles published in a month (6) occurred in November 2003 during the lead-up to Jean stepping down.

Table 4 - Aline Chrétien: Articles per Month

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
1993	x	x	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	2	1	0	3
1994	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	3
1995	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	9
1996	0	1	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	1	7
1997	0	0	0	3	1	1	0	0	3	0	0	1	9
1998	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	5
1999	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	3	0	0	1	9
2000	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	3	2	10
2001	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	5
2002	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	4	0	1	0	0	8
2003	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	1	1	6	1	12
Total													**80**

Figure 5 – Aline Chrétien: Number of Articles per Year



Aline Chrétien was compared to other prime ministers' wives in only 6 percent of the articles that mentioned her; 4 percent stated that she made a better prime minister's wife than the women to whom she was compared. She was most often compared to Mila Mulroney, which is unsurprising since Mila was her immediate predecessor, but she was also compared to her other predecessors. "To the public, Mrs. Chretien is the dullest PM's wife in decades – especially after Mila's shopping orgies and Margaret's disco orgies. Which is fine with her. She abhors the spotlight. It is unseemly" (Wente, 2002). This quotation reinforces my argument that a prime minister's wife, in addition to being well-dressed and supportive, must above all be *quiet*.

Aline Chrétien spent decades in training before she became the prime minister's wife. While Jean was in Cabinet, she played the role of political wife and mother. A profile of Jean, published in 1983, described Aline as "Rosalind Carter in the making" (Steed, 1983). Steed went on to contrast Aline to the irascible Maryon Pearson.

> Aline Chretien was no Maryon Pearson. Mrs. Pearson hated official functions and if she had to attend she did so wearing dark glasses and a scowl. Mrs. Chretien, however, is evidently one of those rare creatures, a political wife who enjoys her role, keeps in touch with the Shawinigan constituents, accompanies her husband to political meetings and sews buttons on his jackets (1983).

Even in those early days, Jean was not shy about attributing to her influence his political success. "If I've been successful in politics […] it's because I've listened to my wife." (qtd. in Cleroux, 1984). In the few articles that referred to Aline before Jean's rise to the prime minister's office, she is treated either neutrally or positively, regularly described as an astute political partner.

Having put in considerable time as a political wife, Aline made the transition to 24 Sussex relatively painlessly. She spent some time in Stornoway before 24 Sussex Drive (Jean was leader of the opposition from December 1990 to October 1993). Only nine articles published in the Globe and Mail during that time that mentioned her at all, and not one of those would have been part of this study, as none of them contained a full sentence with Aline as the subject. Her program of keeping a low profile during the campaign, when her predecessors had their introductions to public life and to the media, was also evident. In speaking about that campaign, she was quoted as saying that "I don't like the limelight [...] I made a point of being private. And when Jean was elected, when he was running for Prime Minister, I could pass in front of the press and they wouldn't know me" (qtd. in Taber, 2003). It may also be that Jean did such an excellent job of developing his image as the "little guy from Shawinigan" that he did not, as Mulroney and Trudeau, require his wife to soften his image and make him more accessible.

After Jean moved to the prime minister's office, Aline continued with her plan to keep a low profile. Only six articles that fit the criteria of this study were published in the year following the couple's installation in 24 Sussex Drive. Of those articles, only one—published in August of 1994—had Aline as its focus. It was an article detailing the circumstances around a television psychic using a letter from Aline Chrétien as an endorsement of her services (Cernetig 94 08 11). The letter itself was merely a polite reply to a letter sent by the psychic to Aline, claiming that she had predicted Jean's rise to power. None of the articles published that first year (including the article by Cernetig) were negative in their treatment of Aline, two were neutral, and four were positive.

Greenspon's article, published in May of 1994, detailed the ways that Jean Chrétien's government was setting a very different tone than the preceding Mulroney government. Among the many policy decisions described in the article, Greenspon notes in approving tones that Aline Chrétien furnished 24 Sussex Drive with government furniture that she got from warehouses and had abandoned Mila Mulroney's office (1994 05 07). There were no expensive re-decorations of the official residence reported; Aline had sidestepped one of the issues that had consistently gotten her predecessors into the press.

Although Aline consistently attended Jean's political events, she did not seek media attention. In fact, the first time that Aline was at the real centre of a series of stories was the famous incident of the intruder in 24 Sussex Drive. A mentally ill man broke into the residence with the intention of killing the prime minister. Aline heard a noise in the night, went to investigate, and came face to face with the man. She quickly went back to the bedroom, locked the door behind her, and called the RCMP. The intruder gave up immediately after he realized he was discovered, but Jean had an Inuit soapstone sculpture that had been in the bedroom at the ready, in case the man tried to break into the bedroom. The press generally framed the incident as an illustration of the poor security surrounding the prime minister while framing Aline as a brave and calm woman when faced with a crisis. For example, the "National Notebook" column of the Globe and Mail stated "Who's strong and hot: Aline Chrétien, who proves, by keeping a cool head when confronted with a knife-wielding burglar, that she retains her regal bearing as well in private as she does in public" ("National Notebook," 1995).

This incident, more than any other connected to the subdued prime minister's wife, stayed in the public consciousness (and was morphed into a more exciting tale of Aline brandishing the sculpture and subduing the intruder; even Globe and Mail reporter Jan Wong mis-reported the incident in 2002 with this spin on it). As previously noted, the largest number of articles in a given month that fit the criteria of my study were published in the aftermath of the incident, and it was regularly brought up afterward. Eight articles were published in November 1994 on the incident, and six more articles in the Globe and Mail published between 1994 and 2003 mentioned it.

In 1996, Aline made what was touted as her first political speech, asking voters to support Sheila Copps' bid for re-election. She made brief remarks and left the event without talking to the media. Even when actively participating in a public event, she was able to evade the spotlight; the article in the Globe and Mail that reported the event was only 209 words, was printed on page A9, and the headline was "Wife says PM wants Copps back in Cabinet" (Canadian Press, 1996).

One of the few times that Aline faced real censure for her decisions on how to play her role as prime minister's wife was when Progressive Conservative Senator Marjorie LaBreton accused her of "ducking public responsibilities as a prime-ministerial spouse." She further contrasted Aline Chrétien's subdued approach to public life to Mila Mulroney's high-profile involvement in charities (qtd. in Brown, 1996). This sentiment, however, was not echoed in any of the other articles in this study. Clearly, Mila Mulroney's style was not missed—at least not overtly—by the reporters at the Globe and Mail.

During her time as prime minister's wife, Aline's linguistic abilities were occasionally called into service. Once again, however, she managed to keep public appearances low-profile. "At ceremonial events, such as Monday's wreath-laying at Mexico City's Monument to the Child Heroes, Governor-General Romeo Leblanc has stood in for Mr. Chretien, accompanied by the Prime Minister's wife, Aline, who speaks Spanish" (McCarthy, 1998). Further, on a state visit to Italy, "Mrs. Chretien, who seldom makes public speeches, even addressed the crowd in a fluent-sounding Italian, paying tribute to the 1.5 million Canadians with Italian roots" (Freeman, 1998).

Aline occasionally stood in for the prime minister when he was unable to attend a ceremony or other event, like Mother Teresa's funeral in 1997 (Stackhouse, 1997) and the funeral for the Taber high school student who was killed at school by a gunman (Mahoney, 1999). On those occasions, she maintained her distance from press, at most making a brief statement.

One of the biggest political events in which Aline took a leading role was the meeting of political spouses from the Americas. She hosted the meeting in Canada and made several speeches which was not in her usual pattern of playing the retiring political spouse. However, even this high-profile event only spawned three articles that fit the criteria of this study. In an article reporting on Aline's involvement, McIlroy notes the aberration in Aline's behaviour but also pointed out that "[l]ike her husband, she has more than 30 years experience in politics" (1999).

2000 was a year in which Aline represented Toronto at an Olympic bid meeting in Sydney, the Chrétiens meet the Pope, and a federal election was held. As a result, 10 articles that fit my criteria (second only to 2003, the year that Jean retired) were published in the Globe and Mail. Of the two articles that discussed the Aline's trip to Sydney, one suggested that she had influenced Mike Harris's decision to sign onto a deal with Ottawa that he had been reluctant to support ("Political Notebook", 2000). The articles on the election generally focused on Aline's powerful influence on Jean and therefore on the fate of the party. One article stated that "[…] Mrs. Chretien was not amused by the efforts of Finance Minister Paul Martin and his supporters to turf her 66-year-old husband. In fact, Mrs. Chretien is so upset over the brazen backstabbing that she wants him to fight for a third election" (Sallot, 2000). Two articles after the election actually stated, however, that Aline had advised Jean not to call an election at all (Scoffield, 2000; Drohan, 2000).

One of the few negative articles that focused on Aline was Jan Wong's profile of Aline Chrétien and Valorie Day, published during the 2000 election (2000). It was nothing short of scathing. It seems her point was that there is no place on the hustings for the political spouse, an argument that, in and of itself has validity—after all, it is the politician who is elected (or not) and who will then be responsible to the voters, not his or her spouse. However, Wong did not take the high road in the piece; she commented nastily on Chrétien's and Day's appearances, from hair to speculation on plastic surgery to dress size. She went into detail about the women's personal lives, describing Aline Chrétien's history of multiple miscarriages and the Chrétiens' prodigal adopted son. It is unclear why the general public needs to know these details about the women's lives, especially when neither of them offered those details to Wong and she was arguing that they should not be a part of the process at all. Indeed, Aline refused an interview, as she usually did for any reporter. It was a nasty piece with little to recommend it as political writing and one that is hard to take seriously.

By 2002, Aline's influence on Jean was more generally discussed in the articles that mention her than ever before; seven of the eight articles in this study for that year mentioned her influence on him. Jean's announcement that he would retire spawned four articles in August 2002 that met my criteria for articles on Aline. Jean often mentioned her in talking about his decision and his career "Aline has always been by my side. I have always called her my Rock of Gibraltar. Two years ago, we agreed that I would not seek a fourth mandate" (qtd. in Taber, 2002a). It is interesting that, though Aline's influence on Jean was generally acknowledged, few questioned its legitimacy in the way they questioned Mila's influence on Brian. It would seem that, as long as the prime minister's wife limits her involvement in her husband's career to advisor in private, rather than active public commentator or advocate, her right to give her opinion is not questioned.

One of the few feature articles on Aline herself was published in August of 2002. It recounted the way the Chretiens had met and Aline's long involvement in Chrétien's career—that she had been campaigning with him since 1963, and that she had always been one of his most trusted advisors. Taber reported that Aline was happy to step away from politics (2002b). It was mostly a "soft article" though, describing Aline's music, her language ability, her love of fitness, and the Chretiens' difficulty with their youngest son, Michel. Features on Aline rarely went beyond saying that she was a trusted advisor to her husband and re-hashing the same few personal details that were known about her. One of the ways she was involved in Jean's political career was not only as a silent helpmate. Taber reported that "She will criticize her husband about what he has said, or how he has acted, if she feels it is deserved. "If you love somebody, you want him to be at his best all the time" [Aline said]" (2002b).

Wente, in another feature article on Aline published in the wake of Jean's announcement that he would be retiring, spoke in admiring tones of Aline's accomplishments and her contributions to Jean's career. The author obviously adored her, stating that "[i]n fact, the very private Mrs. Chretien is made of grit and steel. In her way, she is as proud and political an animal as her husband. Her interests are his, and they are indivisible" (Wente 2002).

Aline and Jean's political partnership, overtly discussed by Aline herself "[w]e're a team, we're partners" (qtd. in Feschuk, 1997) was widely recognized and rarely questioned as to its legitimacy. In fact, Aline spoke about what most people think of as Jean's career in the collective pronoun; in 1997 she said "we have just been elected […] we still have a job to do" (qtd. in Feschuk, 1997) and in 2003, "[…] at the end of our career […]" (qtd. in Canadian Press 2003b).

In summing up Aline Chrétien's time as prime minister's wife, Susan Riley, the author of a scathing book on prime ministers' wives that was published prior to Aline's accession to the role of prime minister's wife stated that "she did everything right" (Riley, 2005). Kingston's article published in the National Post in 2002 confirmed Riley's evaluation of Aline's time in 24 Sussex Drive:

> It's only in retrospect that one can appreciate just how brilliantly Aline Chrétien played the role of political spouse. Not for a second would one ever include the shy and intensely private woman in the same league as Lady Macbeth, Eva Peron, Imelda Marcos, or even Hilary Clinton. No, she was always more clever, more oblique. During her tenure as prime minister's wife, one that has no official function in this country, she remained a stealthy enigma, keeping such a low profile that many Canadians would not recognize her without her husband in the photograph. Unlike many of her predecessors, she stayed under the radar, rarely granting interviews. She made no missteps along the way (2002).

Kingston continued on to contrast the 'missteps' made by Aline's predecessors to what she considered to be Aline's flawless time in office.

The idea of the quietly supportive wife as the most acceptable and appropriate way to play the role was reinforced over and over again in the media coverage of Aline Chrétien's time in office: McIlroy, in a 2003 article that included a retrospective on Aline's life, commented that "[a]s a politician's wife, she is graceful and poised, visible without ever seeking attention." Further, Lindgren reported that "[c]ritics have described her as one of the most effective political spouses Canada has ever seen, [...] who almost always remains silent at her husband's side but is frequently credited with influencing his decisions" (2003).

Members of press gallery were not the only ones who believed that she had successfully filled the role of prime minister's wife; Aline has been cited by several political wives, including Laureen Harper, the current wife of the prime minister (Smyth, 2004), and Terri McGuinty, the wife of the Premier of Ontario (Black, 2003), as being their role model for the way she played her part, and especially for the way she has maintained the family's privacy during Jean's many years in office and on the campaign trail. Aline herself stated that the decade that she spent as prime minister's wife had been "the best time of my life . . ." (qtd. in Taber, 2003).

Conclusion

As I have argued above, Aline Chrétien came to the office of prime minister's wife with a simple plan: be as private as possible. As a result of her generally successful efforts to stay out of the media spotlight, little is known about her and about her life as she lived it while in 24 Sussex Drive. As I noted above, her low-profile (quiet) style is one that has been cited by her successors and other political wives as a model for their behaviour in their roles, and has been pronounced by various commentators as the ideal way to conduct oneself in the role. Her musings on her time in role do not reveal any tones of regret on how she conducted herself or the decisions she made while in office. Truly, the reaction in the media and by her successors to Aline Chrétien's time in office reinforce my argument that success in the role of prime minister's wife in Canada requires that a woman be *quiet* in whatever form her support of her husband takes.

Chapter 6: Comparisons

Introduction

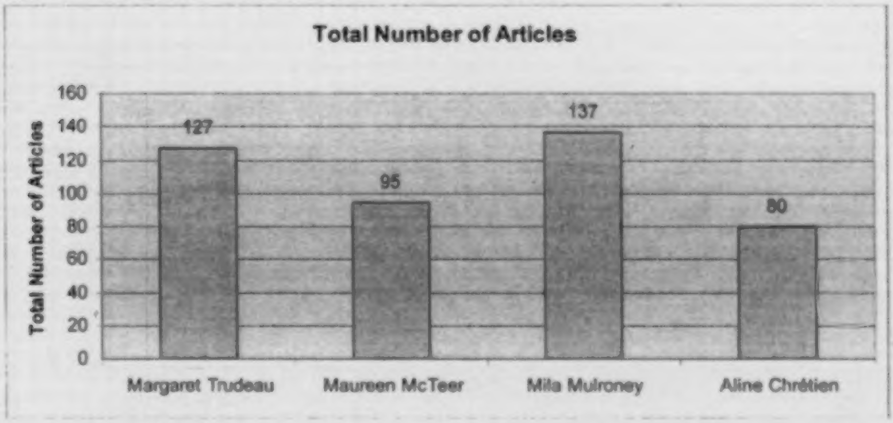
In the preceding chapters, various themes emerged as I answered my research questions, including discussions on each woman's interactions with/treatment by the media, her involvement in politics, her role as advisor to the prime minister, her social/entertaining duties, the public/private split in her life, whether she was involved in causes or advocacy, her profession/attempts at profession, household/decorating, and motherhood. I use this chapter to explore these themes in a comparative way in an attempt to illustrate the (sometimes unexpected) similarities and differences between the women.

Interactions with/treatment by the media

As this study is an attempt, among other things, to perform a study of the media treatment of each women via a quantitative and qualitative analysis of Globe and Mail articles that dealt with each woman during her time in the office of prime minister's wife (and, for some, during her time in the office of wife of leader of opposition), each of the themes that I discuss below include a discussion of the results of my analysis. I give an overview of the more general results of the study in this section.

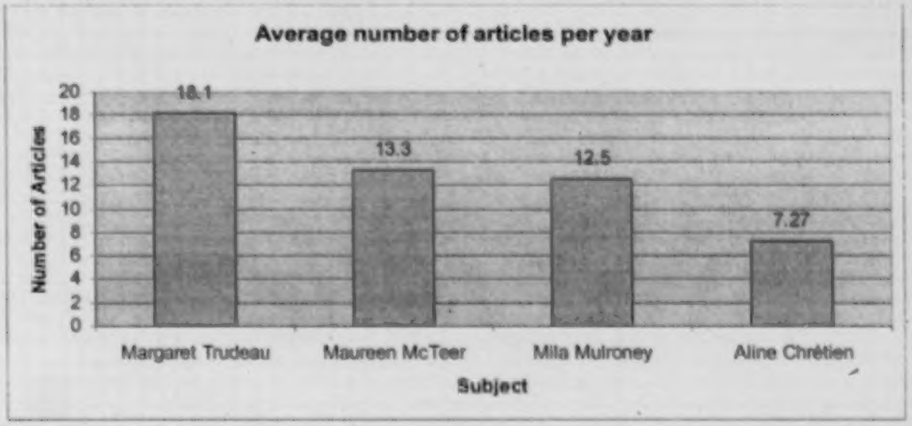
The number of articles that fit the criteria for this study was large. Each woman had a varying number of articles published in any given month and year, depending on what was happening in politics and her life. Figure 8 illustrates the rise and fall of articles for each woman by year in office. Figure 6 compares the total number of articles for each woman. Mila Mulroney had the largest number of stories (with 137 articles published over the decade that she was either wife of the leader of opposition or wife of the prime minister). Interestingly, Aline Chretien, the other long-serving prime minister's wife had the least, with only 80 articles that fell into the criteria of this work over the decade that she served as prime minister's wife.

Figure 6 – Total Number of Articles



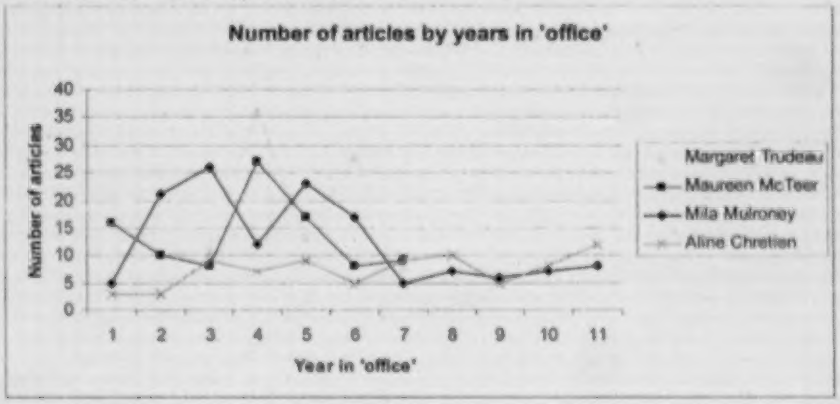
Margaret Trudeau had the second-largest number of articles that fit the criteria of this study from the time she married Pierre Trudeau to the time that they separated (127 in seven years). However, she had the largest average number of articles per year in the role (18.1), compared to Maureen McTeer's average of 13.6, Mila Mulroney's average of 12.5 and Aline Chretien's average of 27 (see Figure 7).

Figure 7 – Average Number of Articles per Year



As illustrated in the Figure 8, Margaret also had the largest number of articles written about her in a given year at 38 published in 1974, the year she participated to popular acclaim in an election. Maureen McTeer followed with 27 published in 1979, the year she campaigned with Joe in the race that won him the office of prime minister, while Mila Mulroney had 26 published in 1985, the year that she was involved in two minor scandals, and Aline Chretien trailed behind the group with 12 published in 2003, the year that Jean Chretien resigned from his position as prime minister.

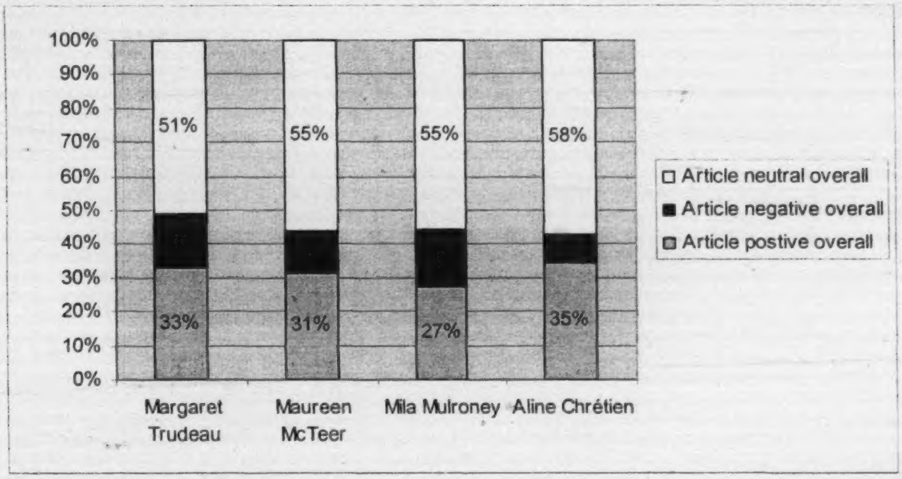
Figure 8 – Number of Articles by Years in 'Office'



It is also clear from the graph that Margaret's high average is the result of several peaks in articles that mention her, while Mila generally had higher numbers in the first years of her term. Mila's article number dropped off, though, by the end of her term, falling below even Aline Chrétien's small but steady number of articles.

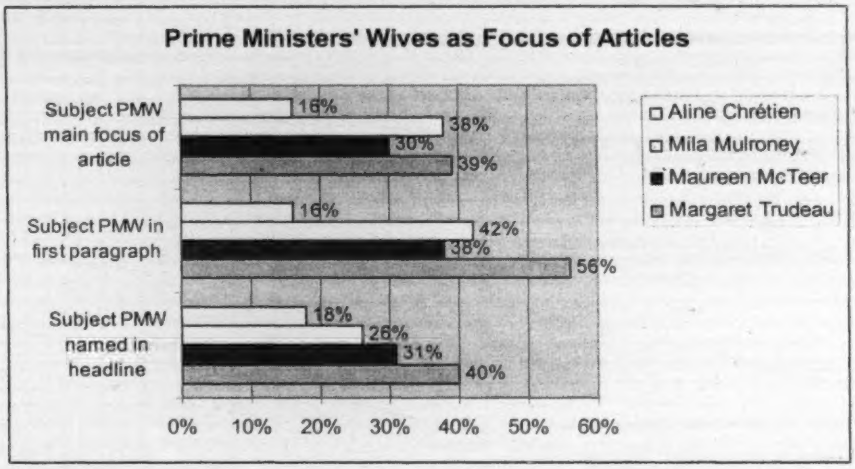
Overall, three of the four women had reasonably similar ratios of positive/negative/neutral coverage, as can be seen from Figure 9, below. The majority of coverage for all four women was neutral, with Aline Chrétien topping the list at 58 percent of articles in the study having a neutral tone. Aline had the smallest ratio of articles with a negative tone (8 percent) and the highest ratio of articles with a positive tone (35 percent). While Mila Mulroney and Maureen McTeer had the same percentage of articles with a neutral tone (55 percent), Mila Mulroney had a larger ratio of articles with a negative tone (17 percent, compared to Maureen McTeer's 12 percent) and a smaller ratio of articles with a positive tone than her predecessor (27 percent versus McTeer's 31 percent). Margaret Trudeau had the lowest ratio of articles with a neutral tone, at 51 percent and was in the middle of the group in both negatively-toned articles (16 percent) and positively-tone articles (33 percent). It is clear that, in all cases, the articles that negatively treated the prime ministers' wives were in the minority.

Figure 9 – Tone of Articles



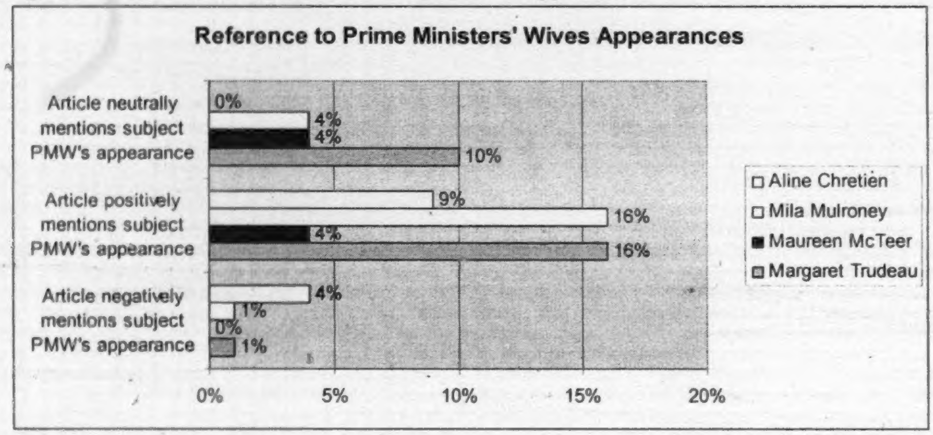
As far as being the focus of articles, versus a quick mention in a bigger story, it is clear from Figure 10 below that, while Margaret Trudeau was only marginally the main focus of the article more than any of the other women in this study, she was mentioned in the first paragraph of a much larger ratio of articles that fit the criteria of this work. She was also mentioned more in the headlines in the articles in this study than any of the other women. Once again, it is unsurprising that Aline Chretien was the focus of only 16 percent of the articles that mentioned her, was mentioned first in only 16 percent of articles and was only named in the headline of 18 percent of the articles that fit the criteria for this study.

Figure 10 – Prime Ministers' Wives as Focus of Articles



Only a small percentage of the articles that discussed each woman also discussed her appearance. As is illustrated by Figure 11, 27 percent of articles mentioned Margaret Trudeau's appearance; she had the largest percentage of articles mention her appearance positively (16 percent), while only one percent negatively mentioned her appearance, and 10 percent neutrally mentioned her appearance. Mila Mulroney followed with a total of 21 percent of articles: 16 percent mentioned her appearance positively, one percent mentioned her appearance negatively, and four percent mentioned her appearance neutrally. Maureen McTeer's appearance was mentioned in a total of eight percent of articles, with four percent of the articles that fit the criteria of the study positively mentioning her appearance, no articles negatively mentioning her appearance, and four percent of the articles neutrally mentioning her appearance. Aline Chrétien received the largest percentage of negative comments about her appearance (although it was still a very small number of articles) with four percent. Nine percent of the articles that mentioned her mentioned her appearance positively but no articles neutrally mentioned her appearance. It is interesting that Maureen McTeer was the prime minister's wife whose appearance was least mentioned. This may indicate that the press simply had more to say about her other attributes. With Margaret, especially at the beginning of her marriage to Pierre, very little was known about her. This may explain the press's attention to her appearance. Margaret seemed preoccupied with her own appearance in her two books. She described in both volumes various outfits that she wore and haircuts that she got throughout her life. She also described her impressions of other women that she encountered based on their clothing and appearances.

Figure 11 – Reference to Prime Ministers' Wives' Appearances



Political role

Each of the women in this study had varying levels of involvement in the politics that surrounded their husbands. Margaret Trudeau's political involvement in general began with the 1974 election. Despite (or perhaps because of) being the daughter of a high-level politician, she had very little interest in politics or in being involved in the Liberal party, as I have already shown in the chapter about her. Pierrre Trudeau had little interest in having her be a part of his career and, after the election, excised her from his political machine.

Maureen McTeer, on the other hand, also had a political father (of the grassroots-party-organizer variety) who infected her with an avid interest in all things political. She was involved, from an early age, in Progressive Conservative politics on the provincial and federal levels and was intimately involved with Joe Clark's political rise and, even after it was no longer feasible for her to be as involved in the nuts-and-bolts of his organization, continued to campaign for him and for other PC candidates.

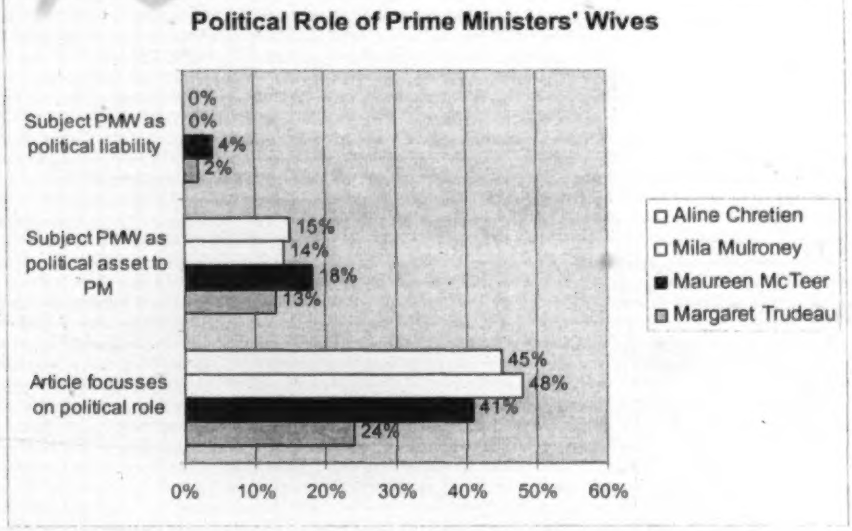
Mila Mulroney's family was not political. She volunteered on the campaign of a PC candidate in Montreal during high school, but was not particularly interested in politics. Indeed, she did not participate in Brian's first bid to become leader of the Progressive Conservative party because she was pregnant and had a young child to care for. However, she became an essential asset to her husband in his second bid for leadership and in every campaign after that.

Aline Chrétien went on the campaign trail with Jean Chrétien in every campaign that he contested from his first bid for a seat in Parliament. She, however, took a much less prominent role than any of the three women above when they were on the campaign trail. She did not make many speeches on her own, certainly did not campaign independently of Jean, and generally stayed in the background.

As can be seen in Figure 12, many of the articles that mentioned the women in this study focused on their political role, whether it was political entertaining, campaigning, or performing some other explicitly political task. Indeed, with the exception of Margaret Trudeau, almost half of the articles in this study focused on the political roles of the prime ministers' wives. Mila Mulroney had the largest ratio of such articles, with 48 percent, followed by Aline Chrétien at 45 percent, and Maureen McTeer at 41 percent. Margaret Trudeau's lack of interest in things political shines through in this instance—only 24 percent of the articles about her focused on her political role. All of those articles were published during or after the 1974 election, with the vast majority having been published during the election.

Interestingly illustrated in Figure 12, the prime ministers' wives under discussion were rarely explicitly discussed in the articles in this study as being political liabilities. While Aline Chrétien and Mila Mulroney were never once mentioned as a political liability, Margaret Trudeau was only occasionally described as a political liability for Pierre, with two percent of the articles; although the articles published after their split and the publication of her autobiography during an election often argued that she was a political liability, they were outside the scope of this study. Maureen McTeer had four percent of the articles saying in some form that she was a political liability for Joe Clark. However, she was also the prime minister's wife who was most often cited as a political asset to her husband. Aline Chrétien followed her with 15 percent of the articles referring to her as a political asset to Jean Chrétien. Mila Mulroney was cited as a political asset to Brian in 14 percent of the articles that mentioned her, while Margaret was cited as a political asset to Pierre in 13 percent of the articles that mentioned her.

Figure 12 – Political Role of Prime Ministers' Wives



The influence that Aline Chrétien and Mila Mulroney had on their husbands was discussed regularly in the articles about them; mention of Aline's influence was made in 33 percent of the articles that mentioned her and her role as his advisor was noted in 30 percent of the articles. Mention of Mila's influence on Brian was made in only 10 percent of the articles that mention her. Mila was described as having a steadying influence on Brian and generally making him more likable. Aline was described multiple times as having been the reason that Jean became as successful as he did. Jean himself described her as his "Rock of Gibraltar."

Social/entertaining duties

Each of the women performed the duties associated with entertaining. Margaret Trudeau did not participate in entertaining for Liberal party functions (as far as she reported in her book) while the others did have functions for the political party. Maureen and Mila were especially active in entertaining the press gallery and in entertaining party officials in a public way. The books that describe their times in office depicted their entertaining experiences in detail. I discussed Maureen and Mila's forays into public entertaining in their respective chapters. It is much harder to determine exactly how much entertaining Aline Chrétien did because of the lack of biographical material on her. While it is certain she did throw parties for Jean (for example on their anniversary and for his birthday) and attended social events, like symphony fundraisers with him, there were no reports of her entertaining in the public way that Maureen and Mila did. All of the women entertained foreign dignitaries at some point during their time in 24 Sussex Drive. Margaret described in her books her attempts at making the visits of her counterparts more interesting, with options for how they would spend their time while under her care. Margaret became friends with the wives of some of the dignitaries that visited, like Queen Noor of Jordan. Mila had many admirers among the international wives of the heads of government, including Barbara Bush and Nancy Reagan. Aline made headlines when Hillary Rodham Clinton dedicated more print space to her than to Jean in Clinton's memoirs. Clinton made it clear that she admired Aline greatly.

Public/private split

Obviously, each woman had a private life and a public life. Figure 13 illustrates the kind of coverage each woman got in relation to her public roles and her private roles. For this study, a reference to a private role was counted if the woman's personal ambitions (for example if she was described as a law student, a photographer, a student of music or language) or roles (being a mother or daughter for example) were mentioned in the articles. Public roles included such activities as hosting dignitaries or the media, media appearances, public speaking, or campaigning). The percentages do not add up to one hundred percent because a single article would regularly reference both public and private roles.

Aline, who made the greatest effort to be a private person had the greatest proportion of articles (59 percent) that referred to her in her private role and the smallest percentage of articles that referred to her public role (64 percent). Private roles included references to her children or grandchildren, to her interest in music, her interest (and abilities) in languages, her golfing interest, and throwing parties for Jean's birthday. Public role references included public speaking, campaigning, public entertaining, charity work, *et cetera*. It is perhaps not surprising that references to her in the media were filled with references to her private role, as she did not participate a great deal in Jean's public life, and did not seek to become a public figure in her own right.

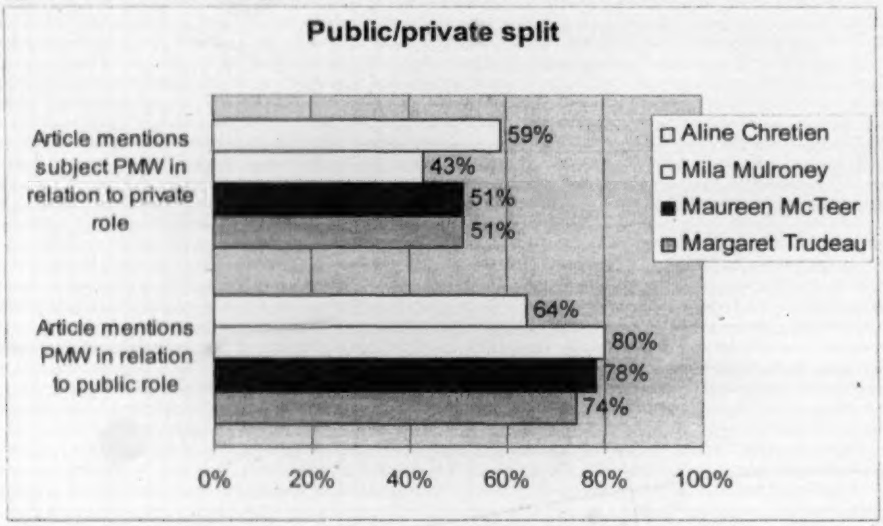
Mila Mulroney, as the most public person, had the smallest percentage of articles that referred to her private roles. On the other hand, she had the largest percentage (80 percent) of articles that referred to her in her public roles of party activist, public hostess, charity fundraiser, *et cetera*. That she was a public prime minister's wife is obviously reflected in the high percentage of articles that describe her in relation to her public activities.

Maureen McTeer was also a very public person; 78 percent of the articles in the study referenced her public role. These references included such activities as campaigning, public speaking, public hostessing, and general advocacy. Private details on motherhood, her education, her profession, *et cetera* were given in 51 percent of the articles in the study.

Margaret Trudeau, despite having little to do with Pierre's political party, still had a large percentage (74 percent) of the articles that mentioned her public role. Such references included, for example, her participation in state visits abroad and campaigning. Fifty-one percent of the articles that mentioned her described her in relation to her private roles, including mother and daughter, as well as her varied interests and her attempts at finding a profession.

I think that it is interesting that the woman who spent the most effort to be in the spotlight—Mila Mulroney—had the smallest percentage of articles that referenced her in private roles. I would have thought that, as a more public figure, the press would have been even more interested in her private life.

Figure 13 – Public/Prive Split in Articles' Treatment of Prime Ministers' Wives



Causes/advocacy

While the first lady of the United States is expected to pick a "pet project" or cause, that seems not to be the case in Canada. Mila Mulroney was the only prime minsiter's wife in this study who officially adopted a charity—the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation—and made it synonymous with her public activities. An entire chapter in Armstrong's book was dedicated to describing Mila's efforts on behalf of the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. However, only 6 articles in this study mentioned her relationship to the Foundation. In addition to her activities for CF, she donated items for charity auctions and advocated for the support of other charities and non-profit organizations. As I described above, she advocated for funding for international organizations that she encountered on state visits. She also joined a group of parliamentary spouses in advocating for stricter laws regarding child abuse.

Margaret Trudeau and Maureen McTeer accommodated various charities by acting as a sort of celebrity judge or spokesperson for a specific event but never adopted one "cause" in the way that Mila did. Margaret has, since her time as prime minister's wife, become a spokesperson for WaterCan, a clean water advocacy group. In addition to supporting various charities while she was in office, Maureen McTeer spoke out on various issues that were important to her, like women's rights, rape laws and gender equality in Parliament.

Profession/attempts at profession

Of the four women in this study, only Maureen McTeer had a profession; she was training to be a lawyer when Joe Clark was selected to be the leader of the Progressive Conservatives. Her journey through law school, bar admission exams, and articling were reported in her autobiography and in the articles that were included in this study. In fact, 32 percent of the articles that mentioned her described her as a law student or lawyer. Her professional ambitions were treated with much greater gravitas than were Margaret's. Indeed, most of the articles that discussed Margaret's attempts at becoming a professional photographer were snide or condescending. Her ambitions at being a photographer were only mentioned in 10 percent of the articles that mentioned her.

Aline Chrétien trained and worked as a bilingual secretary before she and Jean had their first child. She did not continue with paid work after that period, though. There were occasional mentions of her training in the articles, but I did not count them because she did not have a profession during the time that she was wife of the prime minister. Mila Mulroney's almost-complete degree in engineering was discussed in Armstrong's book and was noted in several articles. Mila gave up her education when Brian entered politics, however, and never completed her degree. She did not engage in paid labour during her time in office, but referred to herself as a 'working mother' in Armstrong's biography. She obviously considered the enormous amounts of time and effort that she expended on filling her role during Brian's time as prime minister to be a profession in and of itself.

Household/decorating

Decorating the official residences was something of a flashpoint for Margaret Trudeau, Maureen McTeer and Mila Mulroney. Aline sidestepped the fray by selecting furniture for 24 Sussex Drive from government warehouses and declining to do any further renovations; only 5 percent of the articles that mentioned her discussed decorating or household issues. Margaret's decorating activities in and of themselves did not stir interest from the media. However, once it was possible to contrast her spending on decorating with Maureen McTeer's and Mila Mulroney's, it was mentioned. Thus, only 4 percent of the articles that mentioned Margaret referenced decorating or household issues while 18 percent of the articles that mentioned Maureen McTeer and 13 percent of the articles that mentioned Mila Mulroney referenced decorating or household issues.

Maureen and Margaret, especially, were contrasted in the media, as they were contemporaries (Maureen having been the wife of the leader of the opposition during the time that Margaret was the wife of the prime minister). One book review of Consequences highlighted the contrast vis-à-vis the decorating issue.

> Joe Clark and Maureen McTeer are very different, in background and taste, from Pierre and Margaret Trudeau. Not inferior - different. But this distinction, like so many others, escapes Margaret Trudeau. Miss McTeer, it seems, didn't much like Mrs. Trudeau's orange wall covering, her yellow floor-length curtains or her Italian velvet upholstery. No, the new mistress of 24 Sussex after the 1979 election, if you can believe it, liked beige wallpaper, paisley slipcovers and even navy blue corduroy upholstery. So the Clarks redecorated the Prime Minister's residence. They did it with both simplicity and elegance (Stevens, 1982).

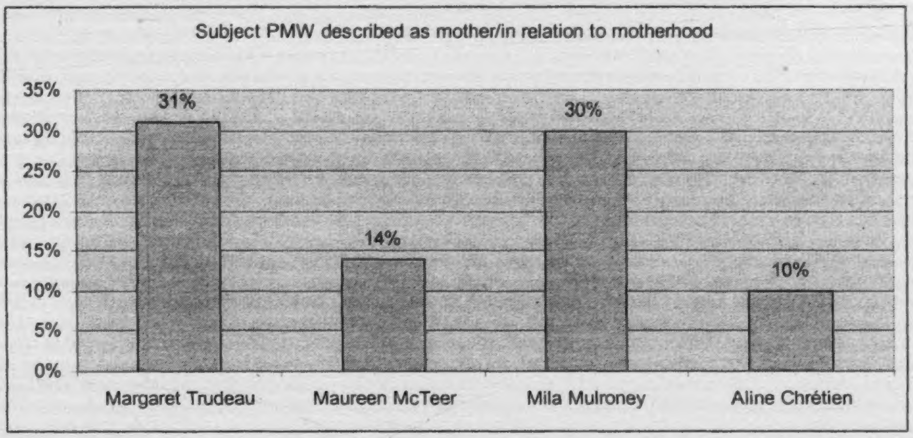
One of the first articles that mentioned Mila Mulroney after Brian's election as prime minister discussed in detail the decorating activities of her two predecessors and her plans for renovations/decorating the official residence (Canadian Press, 1984c). Decorating only really seemed to become a sore point for the public after the scandal on the amount and source of money the Mulroneys spent on redecorating 24 Sussex Drive. Before that, even though public funds were used, it was merely another sort of story for the women's column of the Globe and Mail.

Motherhood

Each of the women in this study were mothers. Margaret was the first woman since Agnes MacDonald to give birth while in office. She had all three of the Trudeau boys while she was resident in 24 Sussex Drive; this is perhaps reflected in the percentage of articles (31) that reference her role as mother. Mila Mulroney also gave birth to a child while she was resident in 24 Sussex Drive; the percentage of articles that referenced her role as mother is very similar to Margaret's: 30 percent. Maureen McTeer gave birth to Catherine Clark while Joe

Clark was leader of the opposition and thus in a less prominent position than Pierre Trudeau or Brian Mulroney. Aline Chrétien was the only woman in this study to have grown children when she occupied the role of prime minister's wife. As a result, Aline had the smallest percentage of articles that referenced her role as a mother. Maureen McTeer stated in her autobiography that one of the decisions that she and Joe made regarding Catherine's exposure to the public was that they would try to limit it as much as possible; it seems that they were successful in that Maureen's role as a mother was comparatively rarely mentioned, with only 14 percent of articles doing so. This small number may also reflect the press's interest in her other pursuits of politics and professionalism.

Figure 14 – Subject PMW Described as Mother/In Relation to Motherhood



Conclusion

All in all, there are multiple points of comparison between the diverse women included in this study of prime minister's wives. The quantitative analysis revealed a surprising similarity in treatment, with similar ratios of articles that were neutral, positive, and negative in their tone. That overall, the majority of articles had a neutral tone when they mentioned the women in this study indicates that the media (and, as I have argued, by extension Canadian society) do not generally have strong feelings about the activities of prime ministers' wives. The qualitative analysis revealed that negative coverage was usually garnered when the women stepped out of what the media felt was their appropriate role of the quiet helpmate to the prime minister, but that each woman had different—and sometimes conflicting—flashpoints for negative coverage. Aline, as the most traditional and lowest profile woman in the group, had the least negative coverage. That I could find so many themes and points of similarity in coverage despite the diversity of the case studies indicates that there is a real continuity in the press's expectations of the role, despite the contradictory messages that coverage sends.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

This study combined a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the role of prime minister's wife through four diverse case studies: Margaret Trudeau, Maureen McTeer, Mila Mulroney, and Aline Chrétien. The qualitative analysis was based on biographical and autobiographical publications and on Globe and Mail articles that fit the criteria of this study that were extracted from two databases. This aspect of the study was necessary to reveal the actions of each woman and how they each shaped the role. The articles revealed not only the way each woman filled the role of prime minister's wife but the reaction of the public—via the media—to each woman's style. The quantitative analysis revealed strong, and often similar, patterns in the media's treatment of each woman. This analysis, then, offered a multi-dimensional approach to the illustration of the difficult role of prime minister's wife and how each woman in the study struggled to balance her personal preference and public expectations. I have shown that the role, a role with no official place in the Canadian polity, is riddled with contradictory and ill-defined expectations.

In addition to the struggle to balance personal preferences and public expectations, Watson noted that "the first lady is forced to juggle the roles of traditional wife and modern woman" (2000: 35). Each of the women in my study struggled with this very balance—except Aline Chrétien, whose chosen role as traditional wife with behind-the-scenes power was not questioned in the press coverage in the Globe and Mail. Margaret Trudeau spent much of her time as a wife and mother, which was not criticized in the press. It was when she attempted to become a professional photographer, actress, and journalist that she was the target of snide commentary in the press. While Maureen

McTeer's professional ambitions were reported regularly (and generally positively) in the Globe and Mail, from her attendance at law school to bar admission exams, to the inception of her art company, her decision to use her own name met with a great deal of rancor from the public and from the Progressive Conservative party. However, Mila Mulroney's choice to be a public figure whose main goal was to support Brian was also castigated in that she was considered to be too much of a traditional wife while also being too much of a public figure. Aline Chrétien's less public way of playing the supportive helpmate did not meet with the same kind of censure. Perhaps this was because of the difference in generations between Mila and Aline—it was possibly easier for the press to expect a more 'modern' approach to the role from a younger woman.

Margaret herself admitted that she was neither prepared nor suited for the role, yet she continues to be one of the most famous of the Canadian prime ministers' wives at home and around the world. Maureen McTeer's style was one that is more common in the modern day than it was during her time. Both Hilary Rodham Clinton and Cherie Booth (both well-regarded lawyers in their own rights) come to mind when seeking comparisons. However, both of those women have met with a great deal of public censure during their time in the spotlight. It would be interesting to see how Canada would react to the Maureen McTeer of the 1970s and 1980s in the role of prime minister's wife today. No other woman who has succeeded Mila Mulroney has imitated her style, nor have I encountered in my research any political wife who has cited Mila Mulroney as a model

Aline Chrétien is the woman that I have held up as the most successful of the four women under discussion. She created a style of politician's wife that others (including

Laureen Tesky Harper) have explicitly cited as their model. Her style was the one that gave the woman who holds the position the most freedom to live her life out of the spotlight, with minimal public duties. Based on Germain Greer's argument that the 'first lady-ization' of the role of spouse of the head of government in different countries is profoundly anti-feminist and is, indeed, illegitimate (Greer, 1995), Aline Chrétien's careful privacy and retrenchment of the role is a blow struck for Canadian feminists after the very public Mila Mulroney's term in office. Greer would probably have trouble, however, with Aline's willingness to attend political rallies and speeches with Jean and to speak of his career with collective pronouns. Maureen McTeer's observation that "the stereotype of a political wife as a quiet, supportive, well-dressed and smiling helpmate was still the norm and what most Canadians wanted" (2003: 48) holds as true today as it did in 1978 when Maureen was struggling to fill the role and reconcile it with her feminist sensibilities.

So the answer to my central question is complicated. A prime minister's wife can shape the role, within general parameters dictated by precedent and current social mores. It important therefore for her to be aware of predecessors' successes and failures and to be cognizant of the social and political climate. She should pursue her goals as privately as possible, whether they are personal goals (like furthering her education) or public goals (like getting her favourite charity more recognition), leaving her spouse in the limelight. She should be aware of the media and try to avoid the attention of reporters. It would appear that any other course of action will meet with censure.

So why should this topic be of interest to students of politics? The way the role has been constructed, in all of its contradictions, says a lot about the role of women in

Canadian politics and society. Above all, I think that it indicates that the work of feminism is not over in those milieus. Women, and wives, are still the subjects of censure if they step beyond the boundaries set for them, especially in the political arena.

I feel that I have barely scratched the surface of this fascinating topic, but I believe that I have also contributed to the understanding of the role; so little has been written about the prime ministers' wives and no empirical work has explored the media's treatment of them. So many other lenses could be used to explore the role of prime minister's wife: an exploration of the reason behind the growth of the celebrity of the position; an exploration of the gendered expectations of the role (would the role fundamentally change if it were filled by a man?); and a wider exploration of Canadians' attitudes toward the prime minister's wife are only some of the avenues for exploration. The most fascinating investigation in my mind, though, is a comparison study of the way the role is filled in several countries with different political systems. This would be a huge undertaking, but one that would yield interesting and possibly surprising results.

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